

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS OF VARYING
CUSTODY AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS UPON THE
EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

University of Cape Town

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CUSTODY AND ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS UPON THE
EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT OF CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Thesis submitted to the Department of Psychology,
University of Cape Town, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
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PREFACE

In recent years there has been a growing awareness of divorce as a significant sociological phenomenon. In spite of this, however, there has been a conspicuous lack of systematic empirical research aimed at examining the effects of divorce upon children.

The present study arose out of many years of work in the psycho-legal field with children of divorce. During the course of this work the need for examining the effects of varying custody and access arrangements upon the emotional adjustment of children became increasingly apparent. This investigation represents the first reported attempt to compare systematically the adjustment of two groups of children: those awarded to their mother's custody, and those awarded to their father's custody. Furthermore, it examines for the first time the differential reactions of children to varying types of access arrangements.

The orientation of the study is primarily clinical, the focus being on experiences reported retrospectively by the children themselves. The aim of the study was to suggest guidelines which would hopefully contribute toward preventing and alleviating stress in children of divorce.

References cited in the text emanate from two main disciplines: psychology and law. As it was anticipated that members of both professions might be interested in this dissertation, it has at times been considered appropriate to define basic concepts in each field for the benefit of practitioners in the other.

Most development in divorce-related research has taken

place in the United States of America; consequently a major portion of the references cited emanate from that country. The principles and issues discussed in this thesis apply to the system of custody and access as it pertains in most Western countries.

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"I couldn't understand why I got on well with each of them separately, but they couldn't get on with each other ..."

(Child of divorce, 11 years of age at the time of the separation)

ABSTRACT

Two aspects of the divorce experience of children are examined: the effects on their ultimate adjustment in relation to the sex of the custodial parent, and the effects of varying types of access.

Ninety-two children of divorce were seen. Fifty-one had been awarded to their mother's custody, and 41 to their father's custody. In all cases the divorce had taken place between five and ten years earlier; the design of the study was thus retrospective. Age-range of the sample was 9 to 28 years, with median age 16.

Interviews were conducted with custodial parents and children. In addition to the interview, each child was examined on projective tests. The aim of this part of the examination was to obtain a measure of the child's adjustment and to elicit emotions in relation to the divorce experience.

Findings revealed no differences in adjustment between children reared by their mothers and those reared by their fathers. Free access was found to be highly valued by the majority of children. The extent to which the divorce was perceived as untraumatic was positively related to free access. General adjustment of the sample did not, however, appear to be affected by access pattern. Comparison of the sample with a matched control group revealed no significant differences in adjustment.

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Divorce has been said to be reaching "epidemic" proportions (Anthony, 1974); in spite of this, however, and in spite of the fact that the law recognises custody and access as presenting judges with some of the most difficult problems encountered in the family law field, there has been a serious lack of empirical research into such issues as awarding of custody and planning suitable access arrangements for children of divorce.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of legal and psychological literature relating to divorce revealed the following:

There is growing concern among members of the legal profession, (especially in the US), regarding the continued use of traditional presumptions, or guidelines, in decisions relating to the child's "best interests". In particular, the automatic favouring of the mother as custodial parent has recently been seriously questioned.

Access has been the subject of considerable disagreement, some writers recommending that there should be as much contact as possible between the child and the non-custodial parent, while others suggest that there should be no formal access arrangements at all. This is clearly an area of conflict for members of both legal and psychological disciplines.

It is becoming universally accepted that the best interests of children are unlikely to be met if examined in the light of a litigious contest between parents. There is

an increasing awareness of a need for legal representation for the children themselves, and the role of the clinician is becoming highlighted as a key figure in helping judges to reach decisions in the best interests of the children.

There has been a recent awakening of general interest in the effects of divorce upon children. The trend in the literature is away from the automatic assumption that divorce inevitably leads to disturbances in children, and suggests that it is rather the nature of the pre-divorce marriage that may have the more serious consequences. The concept of individual vulnerability to the divorce experience has been put forward; there is a growing awareness of the need to consider each child as unique.

ORIENTATION AND AIMS OF STUDY

The orientation of the study was primarily clinical and to a large extent concerned with responses by the children themselves regarding their experiences and emotions in relation to parental divorce. Three main areas were explored:

- (i) The traditional presumption that the mother, except in cases of proven serious deficiency or unfitness, was unquestionably the parent of choice as custodian, was considered to require empirical investigation in the light of changing social roles of the sexes.
- (ii) A need for investigating which access arrangements were most desirable from the child's point of view was considered to be urgent.
- (iii) As this study progressed, a third aim developed, namely, to investigate whether children of divorce were inevitably maladjusted.

SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 92 children, 45 boys and 47 girls, ranging in age from 9 to 28 years, median age 16, of 51 divorced parents drawn from the records of the Supreme Court, Cape Town, Republic of South Africa. Fifty-one children had been awarded to their mother's custody and 41 to their father's custody.

METHOD

Interviews were conducted with custodial parents and children.

One of the purposes of the parental interview was to obtain details regarding the custody and access arrangements, as well as details concerning the constellation of both custodial and non-custodial families.

The children were seen with a view to assessing their level of adjustment, and their reactions to the divorce.

The examination of the child consisted of:

- (i) an interview aimed at eliciting information regarding general level of adjustment;
- (ii) an interview aimed at eliciting information concerning experiences and feelings about the divorce and access arrangements;
- (iii) projective tests.

A control group of 25 matched subjects was seen.

TREATMENT OF FINDINGS

The child's adjustment level was examined primarily in relation to three divorce variables:

- (i) custodial pattern (sex of the custodial parent);
- (ii) access pattern (degree of contact between child and non-custodial parent);
- (iii) interparental turbulence (interparental conflict preceding and/or generated by the divorce, and continuing into the post-divorce period).

FINDINGS

Custodial pattern

No significant differences emerged between the two main groups, i.e. those children in their mother's custody and those in their father's custody, on any measures of adjustment. Furthermore, when sex of the custodial parent was considered in relation to sex of the child, and age of the child at the time of the divorce, no significant differences emerged. This is regarded as a significant and important finding, with far-reaching implications for psychologists as well as for members of the legal profession.

Access pattern

No significant differences in adjustment were found in relation to the pattern of contact with the non-custodial parent. However, the child's perception of problems experienced in relation to the divorce was found to be related to the pattern of access: the more frequent and freer the access, the fewer problems reported by the child. The children's strongly-voiced preference for free access emerged as one of the most significant clinical

findings of the study. This is regarded as important in planning schedules for access in such a way as to meet the best interests of children.

Interparental turbulence

This emerged as the single most significant factor in relation to the adjustment of the children. Children from families characterised by hostility between the parents were significantly less well-adjusted than the rest of the sample.

General adjustment of sample

Findings suggested that in terms of general adjustment, children of divorce are not inevitably disturbed. The highly significant relationship between interparental turbulence and maladjustment, together with the finding of no significant differences in adjustment between the sample and the control group, confirms the opinion of recent writers that it is discord in the home, rather than the divorce itself that leads to disturbances in the children.

Age of child at time of divorce

No relationship emerged between the child's age at the time of the divorce and later adjustment. This suggests that divorce-related problems abate with the passage of time.

CONCLUSIONS

The salient features of this study are as follows:

- (i) It is the first discoverable attempt to measure empirically the difference in adjustment between

children awarded to the custody of their mother, and those awarded to their father's custody. Serious doubt is cast on the favouring of mother as custodial parent. Custody awards should be made only on the basis of merit and not on the basis of sex of the parent.

- (ii) It highlights the need of children of divorce to have freedom to see the non-custodial parent when they so desire.
- (iii) It provides empirical evidence in confirmation of two recent postulations in the area of divorce, namely (a) that children are not inevitably disturbed as a result of divorce, but rather (b) that they react badly to the discord and disharmony associated with divorce.
- (iv) In the finding that divorce-related problems appear to abate with the passage of time, this dissertation provides a hopeful starting point for those in the legal and psychological professions who work with divorcing families.
- (v) Suggestions are made with regard to a re-evaluation of the role of the clinician in custody cases.
- (vi) The importance of counselling divorcing parents, of parent-child communication, and of considering each case on its own individual merits is emphasized.

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INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Nature of research
- 1.2 Extent of the problem:
Need for present study
- 1.3 Theoretical orientation of study
- 1.4 Method of approach
- 1.5 Aims
- 1.6 Hypotheses
- 1.7 Defining concepts
- 1.8 Plan of thesis

1.1 NATURE OF RESEARCH

Management of post-divorce trauma is an ever-increasing area concerning psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, as well as members of the legal profession.

The present study has been undertaken from the standpoint of the clinician who is called upon by members of the legal profession, by the court, and by parents, to advise with regard to issues such as custody and access of children in such a way as to serve their best interests.

It was hoped that by a retrospective study of children who had been through the trauma of divorce and had experienced varying arrangements of custody and contact with the non-custodial parent, valuable information might be obtained which could assist clinicians as well as lawyers in counselling future cases.

The clinician is in the position of being able to observe and having to treat consequential ill-effects upon the emotional state of children of unwise decisions relating

to custody and access. This study attempted to provide clarification of some of the issues facing clinicians, as well as members of the legal profession. Are there decisions made "in the child's best interests" which are in fact deleterious to his well-being? How do children perceive custody and access arrangements, and how do these arrangements affect their level of adjustment? What are the children themselves trying to tell us?

With the wisdom of hindsight, were the recommendations and decisions made at the time of the divorce in fact in the best interests of the children?

1.2 EXTENT OF THE PROBLEM: NEED FOR PRESENT STUDY

1.2.1 Increasing rate of marital dissolution

The rapidly increasing divorce rate is a well-known phenomenon of contemporary society. In South Africa the number of divorces among the white population has doubled since the late 1950s (Report of Marriages and Divorces, 1972). In 1961 there were 4 516 (white) divorces involving 6 170 children; by 1972 this had increased to 8 432, involving nearly 12 000 children. In 1974 the number of divorces rose to 9 907, with one out of every 3,5 marriages ending in divorce (Report on Marriages and Divorces, 1974).

Divorce statistics in the US are even more alarming. America has the highest divorce rate among Western nations. Almost 70% of divorced couples have minor children. There were 701 000 children involved in 523 000 divorces in the US in 1967 (UN Demographic Yearbook, 1968); in 1972 the number of divorces in that country increased to 839 000, with 970 000 divorces being granted in 1974

(US Centre for Health Statistics, 1974; Glick, 1975). According to Anthony (1974) almost 9 million children in the US are children of divorce.

Figures from Britain over the last few years also reflect a steady annual increase in the divorce rate (Mortlock, 1972; Registrar General's Statistical Review, 1972; Judicial Statistics, 1975). The number of divorces in 1961 was 25 400; by 1971 this had risen to 74 400, and by 1972 to 119 000, 75% of which involved children under 16 years of age. A total of 130 481 children experienced parental divorce in Britain in 1972.

In discussing the rate of divorce and the number of children affected, it is important and relevant to underline the fact that while divorce is a legal procedure resulting in termination of the marital union, many marriages disintegrate on the basis of a separation which may or may not be legally determined. Thus, although figures relating to divorce and the number of persons affected are available, no such statistics are available for separation. It has been suggested that the number of separations (including desertions) is very close to the number of legal divorces (Anthony, 1974). The number of children affected by marital dissolution is thus far in excess even of available statistics.

The above statistics underline the magnitude of the problem. Literally millions of children throughout the world are children of divorce. Marital dissolution is clearly an issue of enormous social significance.

1.2.2 Post divorce decisions regarding children

In the vast majority of cases - some exceptions being where one spouse has abandoned the family, or where one party has been found for various reasons to be totally unfit to maintain any further contact with the children -

decisions have to be made regarding the continuing relationship between the children of the union and each of the parents. First to be decided is which parent the child will live with, in other words, which partner will retain physical custody. Contests between spouses over custody of children are a daily occurrence in every court throughout the Western world. The magnitude of this problem and the increasing incidence thereof have been outlined in 1.2.1.

After the decision with regard to custody, the whole issue of continuing contact between the child and the non-custodial parent arises. This relationship is preserved by access arrangements, or, as it is known in the US, by "visitation" arrangements. Among the many vital issues to be examined here are: is it better for the child to maintain contact with the non-custodial parent on a fixed, regulated basis, or is free access more advisable? Is it preferable for contact with the non-custodial parent to be frequent, or occasional?

1.2.3 Lack of previous research

A review of the literature, both psychological and legal, reveals that up until the present time, there has been a remarkable dearth of research relating to the above issues, although the need for such research has been repeatedly voiced (Dominian, 1968; Ellsworth & Levy, 1969; Bradbrook, 1971; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974; Derdeyn, 1974; Weiss, 1975; Rutter, 1976; Palmer, 1976).

At the time of commencing this study there were no empirical studies reported in the literature on the effects of specific custody and access arrangements.

No previous attempt has been made, to this writer's knowledge, of examining the effects upon the emotional

adjustment of children of divorce according to the sex of the custodial parent. The whole question of access to the children by the non-custodial parent has received scant attention, both in the literature, and in daily divorce proceedings, where the critical issue of the future relationship between the child and the non-custodial parent is all too frequently disposed of, at least in South Africa, with the ruling "reasonable access". In the experience of this writer, "reasonable access" is an ambiguous term, which often leads to misinterpretation by both spouses and ultimately therefore to confusion and possible emotional damage in the child.

1.2.4 Move toward "best interests" of the child in custody decisions

The law relating to custody of children has been modified over the years, in keeping with changing moral attitudes of society, and the increase in knowledge of child development. Whereas formerly it was recognised by both Roman-Dutch and English law, as well as early Common law in the US that the father's right to custody was superior to that of the mother, gradually the welfare of the child came to be recognised as the significant factor in determining custody. Out of this recognition, and in keeping with developments in the field of child psychiatry, came the belief that it was the mother who was the most needed parent, especially by children of "tender age", and that the custody of young children should therefore be given to her in preference to the father, irrespective of the question of guilt or innocence in the divorce action, or of the relative suitability of the parents. For a considerable length of time the loading of custody awards has been very much on the side of the mother, who has been given greater advantage and preference. There has, however, been a recent movement toward questioning the wisdom of this premise, and toward a re-examination of the whole issue of custody, particularly in the US.

"In a day where the traditional family roles are rapidly changing with more women seeking careers outside the home, there are no persuasive reasons for denying a father custody of his children when he is fit and equally prepared to care for adequately and rear his children merely because the mother's behaviour does not amount to gross misconduct " (Boyle, 1972).

There is a growing realisation that the only issue in determining custody of children is to consider what is best for the child, and that custody awards should not be made on the basis of preference of one parent over the other.

It seemed, therefore, that there was a real need for research in this area. It was hoped that some answers would be provided which would confirm or reject some of the currently held views regarding custody of children.

1.3 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION OF STUDY

Optimal development in the growing child is viewed as the active interaction of biological resources with supportive challenges of the environment. Resolution of previous crises (Erikson, 1950, 1950a) form the basis for subsequent growth towards maturity, and with the development of ego strengths, the ability to adapt to change. Within this framework, the first ego-crisis, "Basic Trust" sets the pattern. In studying this early stage, the work of Bowlby (1969; 1973) is relevant and important. The infant-parent relationship is seen as a close bonding relationship fostered by both parties, the aim being survival of the individual and of the species. This

early relationship is crucial and would apply in any society. In this investigation the Western ethos with its small nuclear family has been the focus of study.

1.4

METHOD OF APPROACH

Within the framework outlined in 1.3, this study sought to evaluate the differential ego-supportive roles of father and mother in the emotional development of the growing child. In order to do this, a group of 51 children awarded to the custody of their mother and 41 children awarded to their father's custody were compared with regard to their level of adjustment.

The primary emphasis in approach is from a clinical standpoint, the focus being on what the children themselves experienced and reported. Psychological assessment techniques were used as corroborative measures of adjustment, but these were considered adjuncts to the main tool of the investigation, the clinical interview.

The study can be described as retrospective, in that it is concerned with the examination of children several years following parental divorce.

At all times practical implications of the findings were kept uppermost in mind.

1.5

AIMS

1.5.1

General

- (i) It was hoped that the present study would provide guidelines for legal advisors, psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers, as well as for parents,

in their understanding and handling of issues arising out of custody and access of children of divorce.

- (ii) It was hoped that findings arising out of this study would ultimately, through (i) above, lead toward the reduction of trauma and conflict in children whose parents divorce.
- (iii) However methodologically difficult it has been to investigate these problems, it was thought that a start should be made which would hopefully lead to further possibly more articulate research (see 7.2).

1.5.2 Specific

- (i) A major aim of this study was to compare the adjustment of two groups of children: those who had been awarded to their mother as custodian and those who had been awarded to their father's custody.

By investigating some five to ten years after the divorce, the emotional adjustment of the above two groups of children, it was hoped that this study would help to elucidate the question of whether in fact there is any basis for assuming that the mother should be the preferred custodial parent.

- (ii) Related to (i) above was a consideration of the sex of the child in relation to the sex of the custodial parent, and an examination of whether there is any evidence for awarding custody on this basis.
- (iii) A need for investigating which access arrangements were most desirable from the child's point of view was considered to be urgent. This would involve a comparison of the adjustment of children who had experienced differing patterns of contact with the non-custodial parent subsequent to the divorce.

An important focus of this part of the investigation was on sentiments the children themselves expressed.

- (iv) It was the experience of the writer that the decree of "reasonable access" (Hahlo, 1975) so commonly found in divorce papers, was one which frequently gave rise to considerable abuse, because of a lack of sufficient clarity and definition within the legal framework as to what constitutes "reasonable". It appeared that the best interests of children, as well as of their parents were not necessarily served or considered in such a recommendation. Indeed it frequently laid the groundwork for extended, costly and distressing litigation.
- (v) For many years the accepted view was that divorce inevitably led to disturbances in children (Peck, 1953; Kanner, 1957; Kenkel, 1960; Lantz & Snyder, 1962). A review of the literature over the past two decades, however, points to a growing realisation that factors other than the break-up of the family per se are significant in causing disturbances in children (Despert, 1953; Goode, 1956; Westman et al., 1970; Rutter, 1971). As the study developed, it became a major object of focus to examine whether in fact children of divorce are inevitably maladjusted. This aim would be met by a comparison of the general adjustment level of children of divorce with children raised in an "intact" home.
- (vi) It was considered important to examine whether there is any relationship between the age of the child at the time of parental divorce, and later adjustment or maladjustment.
- (vii) An examination of the role of the clinician in custody disputes was regarded as an important area of investigation. The purpose of this would be to

suggest possible modifications in this role, in order to meet the best interests of children.

1.5.3 Limitations in relation to aims

The writer has been aware from the outset of the pitfalls inherent in a study of this nature. It is appreciated that around the trauma of divorce there are many inter-related factors which could lead to disturbances in children, rather than any one specific factor. For example, the quality of the marriage before the separation, the nature of child's relationships with each parent, the family constellation, and the age of the child at the time of the divorce, are all factors to be considered. Furthermore, divorce is not something that begins and ends in the courtroom. The "divorce" actually starts many months and in some cases years before the legal dissolution of the marriage; in many instances the turbulent relationship between the spouses continues for a considerable length of time after they are divorced. The latter is true particularly when the couple has children, the children acting as reinforcers and reasons for the continued contact between parents. Thus any study of the effects of divorce has to take into account factors occurring before, during and after the divorce itself. It may not be possible to separate the effects of one of these periods from the interactions of the others.

1.6 HYPOTHESES

Rather than being a study which sets out to confirm or disconfirm certain hypotheses, it seemed more appropriate to conceptualise this investigation as hypothesis-generating. The means whereby hypotheses would emerge were sought in the exploration of such issues as:

- * whether there is any basis for assuming a preference for the mother as custodial parent;
- * whether there is any evidence that children of tender age should always be placed with their mother;
- * whether there is any confirmation for the presumption that girls are better placed with their mothers and boys with their fathers;
- * whether it is inevitable for divorce to have a negative effect on the emotional adjustment of children (see 7.2).

1.7

DEFINING CONCEPTS

In order to make the text less cumbersome for the reader, it is considered necessary to define certain of the terms and concepts used in the study.

(i) Child

This is used in the sense of "child of divorced parents" and is not intended to convey any specific idea of age. As will be seen, some interviewees were themselves married; they are nonetheless regarded, for purposes of this study, as the "child" being examined.

(ii) Custodial Parent

There is a distinction in (South African) law between legal and physical custody, so that in certain instances, even though one parent might legally be custodian, the child in fact lives with the non-custodial parent. This study is concerned with the parent with whom the child lives (or lived for the duration of childhood after the divorce). Irrespective of the legal decree, the parent with whom the child lives is

regarded here as the "custodial parent".

(iii) Divorce

In ascertaining the age of the child when the divorce took place, it was considered more meaningful to regard the date of departure of the non-custodial parent from the home (i.e. when the parents separated) as the significant date, rather than that of the legal event. In the majority of cases these two dates were fairly close to each other; there were some instances, however, where the marital dissolution occurred a considerable time before the legal divorce, and in these instances the time of separation was regarded as the time of "divorce". "... it is separation, not divorce, that disrupts the structure of the individual's social and emotional life" (Weiss, 1975).

(iv) Children of divorce

This term is used in the sense of children of parents who have divorced.

(v) Access

The term "access" is used in this dissertation to indicate the actual amount and/or type of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent. A distinction is made between the "decree" of access, in the legal sense, and the "degree" of access, that is, the actual amount of time spent together (for detailed description of "Access Patterns", see 4.6.1.2).

It should be noted that the term "access" is not universally used among English-speaking countries. Whilst this term is commonly used in South Africa and Britain, in the US and Canada, contact between the child and the non-custodial parent is known as "visitation" and "visiting" respectively.

(vi) Use of 'he' and 'his', 'C' and 'S'

The masculine third person pronoun is used in the universal sense for reasons of clarity and simplicity in writing style, when referring to both parents and children.

C is used on occasion as an abbreviation for "child".

S is used on occasion as an abbreviation for "subject".

E is used on occasion as an abbreviation for "examiner".

1.8

PLAN OF THESIS

In order to orientate the reader, a brief outline of the plan of this dissertation will be presented.

As the subject under investigation embraces two disciplines, law and psychology, it has been necessary to review the relevant literature in both these areas, necessitating two review chapters.

The two main areas investigated, custody and access, being essentially legal concepts, it was considered appropriate to present the legal review first. Furthermore, it was thought that this arrangement would provide the necessary backdrop against which the psychological aspects could then be better elucidated.

After the reviews of relevant literature, the research design of the present investigation will be described. This will be followed by a presentation of the results emanating from the study, a critical evaluation of the methodological approach, and a discussion of the main

findings and core issues arising out of the study. The dissertation will conclude with an examination of hypotheses, and suggestions for further research that have been stimulated by this study.

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:LEGAL ISSUES

- 2.1 Custody and the concept of child's best interests
- 2.2 Access
- 2.3 The adversary process in custody decisions
- 2.4 Role of the clinician in custody disputes
- 2.5 Legal representation for the child

This chapter will commence with a definition of custody, and a brief historical survey of the legal attitude in relation to custody awards. Guidelines for assisting the court to determine the best interests of the child will be discussed, with special attention to the tender age doctrine, and the preference of mother as custodial parent.

A discussion of access in all its significant aspects will follow.

Some pitfalls in the use of the adversary system in custody decisions will be considered, in particular, the "alignment" of clinicians with one side. This aspect will be more fully discussed in evaluating the role of the clinician in custody disputes.

The chapter will end with a brief examination of a recent movement in the US which aims at full legal representation for children.

2.1 CUSTODY AND THE CONCEPT OF CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS

2.1.1 Definition of custody

"A judge agonizes more about reaching the right result in a contested custody issue than about any other type of decision he renders".
(Botein, 1952).

Custody in its broadest sense, refers to the relationship between parents and child in a normal family (Clarke, 1968). When parents divorce, the custodial parent is the one with whom the child lives; this parent has the right to control the child's daily life and to decide all questions relating to education, training and religious upbringing, to determine which homes the child may or may not enter, and with whom he may or may not associate.

Spiro (1971), in discussing custody as applied in South Africa, has said that the term "custody" connotes some degree of responsibility. In South Africa, when the mother is granted custody, the father usually retains guardianship: this means that it is his right and duty to take charge of and administer the property of the minor, invest his money, pay his debts and contract on his behalf in business matters. In legal proceedings the minor must be represented or assisted by his father, even though the mother is custodian (Hahlo, 1975).

In Britain a situation exists whereby although the father is awarded custody, the mother may be given "care and control". This means that the mother looks after the child's everyday needs, but important issues such as education, religion and marriage are the father's responsibility (Sanctuary & Whitehead, 1970).

Custody disputes are usually a result of each parent attempting to obtain custody of their child following

divorce. Custody disputes can also occur between a natural parent and a third party, for example, an adoptive parent or a grandparent. The present study will concern itself only with the first circumstance, that is, where the issue of custody is between the mother and father of the child.*

2.1.2 Historical development of concept of child's best interests

The origin of the role of the law in deciding custody disputes is usually traced to the concept of "parens patriae" and the duty of the court to protect the child who is unable to protect himself (Foster & Freed, 1964; Hudson, 1970). Early Common law, as well as English and Roman-Dutch law** recognised that father's right to custody was superior to that of mother, seen in the framework of the paramount rights of a man over his family. The father was regarded as natural guardian of his children and it was not until 1839 that the Chancellor in the English courts was given power by

* The principle of "unfitness" (Simpson, 1962; Foster & Freed, 1964) or "parental right" (Hudson, 1970) as applied by the courts in depriving a natural parent of custody will consequently not fall under discussion here.

** In South Africa (also Sri Lanka) the legal system is based upon Roman-Dutch law. While this legal system differs in certain respect from that practised in the US or in England, as far as custody and access of children is concerned, for all practical purposes there is no difference.

statute to award custody of children under seven to mother rather than to father (Foster & Freed, 1964, Part I; Goldstein & Katz, 1965). Gradually the courts began to show a readiness to interfere with father's rights if the welfare of the child demanded it. The focus of attention shifted to the "best interest of the child", and it became the responsibility of the State to further that interest.

The "best interest" rule focusses upon the child's well-being and "hopefully implements the societal interest in insuring an environment in which the maximum potential of each child may be realized" (Taylor, 1975).

The Guardianship of Infants Act (1925) (cited in Giles, 1959; Bromley, 1962) proclaimed the equality of mother and father as custodial parents. This Act covers all minors and states that the court "shall regard the welfare of the infant as the first and paramount consideration". This principle is also followed in Canadian law (Mushin, 1973).

A parallel development has taken place in the US. American courts never developed the strict view as to father's rights formerly characteristic of English law, but operate according to the rule that the best interests of the child should be considered in custody disputes. Mothers have attained an equal right to custody in legal theory, and in practice usually prevail over fathers except in extreme cases of maternal unfitness (Foster & Freed, 1964).

In South Africa it was with Centlivres* JA in Fletcher

* Where the letter "J" appears after a name, this means that the person concerned is a judge. "JA" indicates Appeal Court Judge.

v. Fletcher (1948)* that a milestone in awarding custody was reached. This case marked the departure from Roman-Dutch law, in holding that the paramount consideration is the interest of the children, and that custody should not be granted to one parent as a means of punishing the other (Spiro, 1971; Sornarajah, 1973).

The problem of awarding custody is an extremely difficult and serious matter, not only because a judge is called upon to make a decision crucial to the life of a child and his relationships with his parents, but also because the law relating to custody has changed and continues to do so with changes in moral attitudes of society and the development of psychiatry and sociology (Podell, Peck & First, 1973; Title, 1974; Taylor, 1975).

At no stage in the course of court proceedings are emotions at a higher pitch than when hostile parents confront each other over the custody of their children.

* The psychological convention for citing references as opposed to the legal convention, has been adopted throughout.

2.1.3 Guidelines for determining child's best interests

How is the court to determine what constitutes the welfare or best interest of the child? The discretion of the judge is paramount in custody decisions. Certain guidelines or presumptions, however, have evolved in assisting the court to reach a decision (Foster & Freed, 1964; Clark, 1968). These include, inter alia :

- (i) Age and sex of child;
- (ii) Child's preference;
- (iii) Religious considerations;
- (iv) Financial factors;
- (v) Moral considerations;
- (vi) Mental and physical health of parents;
- (vii) Maintaining continuity for the child;
- (viii) Keeping siblings undivided;
- (ix) Working out a programme for access by non-custodial parent.

(i) Age and sex of child

The "tender years" doctrine is widely applied by the courts (Foster & Freed, 1964; Cardwell, 1975). When a child is of tender years (see 2.1.2) it is taken as prima facie evidence that mother is entitled to custody. This is especially true when the child is a girl (Kahle, 1968-1969). Since most divorces occur in the early years of marriage, the practical effect of the "tender age" presumption is that mother usually receives custody. Derdeyn (1976) refers to the "tender years" presumption as the "mainstay of the mother's superior right to custody" (p.1373).

Some courts have also taken the view that older children, particularly adolescents, are better placed with the parent of the same sex. This is no doubt based

upon the assumption that close association with same-sex parent is of crucial importance in identification, especially sex-role identification, one of the major developmental goals of adolescence (e.g. Biller, 1971).

(ii) Child's preference

It is felt by some that the child's wishes and preferences should be considered in custody decisions. Factors such as age, intelligence and maturity should be examined in this connection. The child's preference should be based on legitimate reasons, not merely upon a whim, or desire to avoid parental control. Foster and Freed (1964) feel that "at least where the pertinent factors are evenly balanced, the child's wishes should be decisive unless the person chosen by the child is obviously unfit or the child's choice is the result of coercion or bribery" (p.443). Payton (1971) considers that the child's desire should be regarded as "illuminating" but never "decisive". Podell, Peck and First (1972) consider that in most cases it will be in the child's best interest to be with the preferred parent. In Britain, a recent Bill (House of Commons, 1975) which aims at the protection of children's interests, states that a local authority ... "shall so far as practicable ascertain the wishes and feelings of the child regarding the decision and give due consideration to them, having regard to his age and understanding."

In contrast, Galligan J (1973) finds it of little help to seek the opinion of children, especially if they are young. "The pressure upon the children at the time of a trial and the fact that motives of youngsters can change from day to day, cause me to

be reluctant to place much value upon what they might say on a given occasion."

(iii) Religious considerations

Religious factors are generally considered to be only an aspect of what constitutes the child's best interests and are accorded minor weight (Kahle, 1968-1969). It is felt that where possible, continuity of religious education should be preserved. In *Welker v. Welker* (1964) (Wisconsin, US) the court held as a matter of law that a party could not be denied custody on the grounds of doubts regarding the existence of God, and classification of religious beliefs as agnostic.

(iv) Financial factors

It is usually desirable that children should continue in their prior standard of living; however, material needs beyond basic requirements for living are not among the more crucial ones considered (Payton, 1971). Watson (1969) does however point out that the "material need issues" can have effects on subsequent parental involvement with children. If unfairly handled, this issue can stimulate resentments which could affect the children's relationship with one or other parent.

(v) Moral considerations

Moral unfitness of each parent must be weighed by the court in relation to its effect upon the child (Cardwell, 1975). Evidence of unfitness comes from factors such as parent's emotional instability, frequent immoral acts, or failure to provide adequate

parental care and guidance. Love and affection is a basic prerequisite for a parent being awarded custody. However, as Payton (1971) points out, these emotions are usually assumed to exist unless some demonstrable negative actions such as cruelty, desertion, abandonment or neglect of the child are shown. In considering a parent's suitability for custody, there are various types of conduct which courts, at least in the US, have specifically rejected. Courts have repeatedly held that the personal lifestyle of a parent, whether illegal or immoral, provided it does not adversely affect the ability to be a parent and raise children, is not determinative in custody questions, "for a parent may be a bad spouse or citizen without necessarily being a bad parent" (Podell et al, 1973). Podell et al refer to a case as early as 1919 (Jensen v. Jensen) where the Wisconsin Court held that an illegal attempted remarriage, including cohabitation, did not necessarily "demonstrate depravity of heart or moral unfitness to bring up a child." In more recent cases (Hamachek vs. Hamachek, 1959; Wendland v. Wendland, 1965), it has been stressed by the court that in the absence of a finding of unfitness, there must be clear evidence of the parent's immoral conduct on the welfare of the children before it is considered significant. Similarly in Molloy v. Molloy (1970) the Wisconsin Supreme Court declined to hold as a matter of law that adultery rendered a mother unfit to have custody of her children, but agreed that it was a factor to be considered.

(vi) Mental and physical health of parents

The mental and physical health of the parent should also be considered (Payton, 1971; Belson, 1975).

Any illness from which the parent is suffering should be evaluated from the point of view of its expected effect on the child's welfare.

(vii) Continuity

Concern has been expressed regarding a break in continuity of custody placements (Foster and Freed, 1964; Watson, 1969; Goldstein, Freud & Solnit, 1973; Title, 1974). Title (1974) suggests that if there should be any "legal advantage" with either parent, it should be the one in whose custody the children have been for a substantial time. Goldstein et al. regard continuity as one of the crucial guidelines (see 2.1.6) in awarding custody.

(viii) Siblings

As far as possible it is considered advisable not to separate siblings. However, in practice it frequently occurs that siblings are divided or split between parents - this usually occurs on the basis of sex: girls being awarded to mother and boys to father; or of age: younger children to mother and older ones to father.

(ix) Access

Rights of access are customarily granted to the non-custodial parent, based on the principle that a parent has a right to see his child. Access rights are denied only where it is strongly felt that this contact will have a deleterious effect upon the child's physical or emotional well-being (see 2.2).

Criteria as to the interests of children that are applied by the South African courts (Spiro, 1971; Sornarajah, 1973; Hahlo, 1975) are :

Custody of children of tender age should be given to mother.

Custody of son should be given to father and that of daughter to mother.

Custody should not be given to an immoral parent.

Antagonism of child towards a particular parent should be considered.

Child's existing associations and environment should not be lightly disturbed.

Greater wealth of one parent should not be a consideration.

Sornarajah (1973) points out that although it is an accepted rule that custody decisions should be made in accordance with the "interests" of the children, there is in fact no precise definition of these "interests".

2.1.4 Criticism of guidelines

The use of traditional presumptions or guidelines in awarding custody has been the subject of critical discussion by legal writers in recent years. Foster and Freed (1964) state that historically, custody awards have been controlled by "amorphous platitudes or generalizations on the one hand and by rigid absolutes on the other" (p.423). They urge that the law of custody should not be an obstacle to resolving urgent social and human problems. "It is a matter of grave concern that in an area of such great human and social importance courts are failing to lay down rules sufficiently precise for meaningful guidance and often insulating themselves from relevant expert advice and information" (p.427). It has been argued repeatedly that the presumptions have led to generalising, rather than considering the unique features of each case. In fact Foster (1973) goes so far as to suggest that reliance upon the presumptions is a way for judges to avoid hard work in custody cases. Furthermore, he has pointed out (1964) that statutes defining criteria for making custody awards are conspicuously vague in many American states. Statements like "as may be reasonable and just", "as it deems just and proper", or "in accord with the best interests of the child" abound in judgments. He stresses that arbitrary rules, such as the award of children of tender age to mother, if applied without due regard to the facts of each individual case, could in fact work against the best interests of the child, by inhibiting adequate evaluation. He urges that custody decisions be flexible rather than rigid.

A similar view is expressed by Hahlo in the Annual Survey of South African Law (1971): "Each case turns on its own facts, and there is little to be gained from looking at precedents or rules". In similar vein an editorial article in the Australian Law Journal (1971) strongly

suggests that rules or aphorisms should not be relied upon in custody decisions, and cites Barwick as saying that these are "... as like to mislead as assist" (p.53).

In spite of these criticisms, however, the presumptions continue to influence the court. One reason for this is that they provide a structure in an area in which decision-making is so difficult.

2.1.5 Mother vs. father as custodial parent

Since one of the primary aims of the present research is to explore the issue of mother as compared to father custody, it is relevant to pay special attention to the literature insofar as the "tender age" presumption is concerned. There has been a recent critical examination of this principle, particularly in some parts of the US. The cultural milieu of the 19th century which dictated the roles of mothers as homemakers and fathers as breadwinners compelled the decision that young children be placed with their mothers. With significant changes in the traditional socio-economic sexual roles in recent years has come a movement toward re-examination of the tender years doctrine. Taylor (1975) states for example, that the tender years doctrine is based upon a status, the physiological fact of motherhood, rather than objective factors

relating to the child's best interests, such as the developmental acts of motherhood. He is one of several people who speak out strongly against uncritical acceptance of the tender age doctrine. The danger inherent in blind acceptance of this doctrine is well illustrated by the unequivocal terms used by Underwood J (1968): "Everybody understands that a mother is better equipped to raise a child than is the father".

It has come to be accepted that by discarding the presumption in favour of mother, courts will focus upon other factors which directly bear on the child's best interest, factors which compare relative abilities of parents to care physically and emotionally for minor children. Thus, in situations where both parents are employed (i.e. unable to be with the child during the day), decisions other than those based on favouring mother as custodian would have to be explored. "When judges eliminate this doctrine which has clouded the real issue, they will come closer to the goal of furthering the best interest of the child" (Taylor, 1975, p.527).

In Britain the Guardianship of Infants Act (1925), (see 2.1.2) marked a milestone in the establishment of equality between the sexes in law. "Where ... the custody or up-bringing of an infant ... is in question, the court ... shall regard the welfare of the infant as the first and paramount consideration and shall not take into consideration whether ... the claim of the father ... is superior to that of the mother, or the claim of the mother is superior to that of the father".

The trend away from unquestioning acceptance of the tender age presumption is regarded by some (Derdeyn, 1976) as the most important recent development in the area of inter-parental custody disputes. This trend can perhaps be illustrated by a comparison of the following two quotations:

The first comes from a judgment in 1921 (Jenkins v. Jenkins, cited in Podell, Peck & First, 1973):

"... nothing can be an adequate substitute for mother-love - for that constant ministration required during the period of nurture that only a mother can give because in her alone duty is swallowed up in desire; in her alone is service expressed in terms of love. She alone has the patience and sympathy required to mould and soothe the infant mind in its adjustments to its environment. The difference between fatherhood and motherhood in this respect is fundamental ..."

The second passage, taken from the Domestic Relations Law (1971) in Florida US, in sharp contrast to the above, gives the father equal consideration in awarding custody:

"The court shall award custody and visitation rights of minor children of the parties as a part of proceeding for dissolution of marriage in accordance with the best interest of the child. Upon considering all relevant factors, the father of the child shall be given the same consideration as the mother in determining custody".

Many people have strongly identified themselves with the trend away from the assumption that maternal custody is best. Podell et al (1973) state that "the assumption that the mother is a better custodian was and is wrong from an historical, economic, sociological and philosophical point of view" (p.53). They point out that the notion is unfounded because it fails to consider the divorce reality where mother must assume both a mother's and father's role, and should not be entitled to custody under the traditional "motherhood" test. Tritico (1974) refers to the "present system's failure in such a crucial determination to meet the needs of the child ...", and is of the opinion that the presumption in favour of the mother prevents a thorough examination of the facts of each case.

Title (1974) points out that with the new role of women in accordance with changing mores of society, it is no longer realistic to expect a mother to forgo her career in order to rear her child. He suggests that in the days when "a mother's place was in the home" the maternal preference rule might have had some "marginal value" as a consideration in awarding custody; today, however, he regards it as an "invalid consideration". Title thus speaks out strongly against automatic preference of mother as custodial parent. He contends that if the mother is regarded as having a paramount right to custody, and deprived thereof only when proved to be morally, physically or emotionally unfit, the court is failing to apply the positive law of child custody which should consist of an examination of the positive advantages each of the competing parties can bestow on the child. Furthermore, the automatic preference of mother places father in a disadvantageous position, for not only does he have to show that he is a better guardian, but also that the mother is unfit to be custodian.

In support of his strong stand on this issue, Title points to the lack of conclusive scientific evidence in the literature to show that mother is more important than father in the child's development. He points out that whereas prior to the 1960's most studies dealing with detrimental effects of parental deprivation involved separation of child from its mother, more recent studies have demonstrated adverse effects arising out of paternal separation (see 3.2.4). He contends that fathers are as capable as mothers of responding to young children and of becoming involved on a deep emotional level.

Title suggests the following measures to replace the maternal preference rule:

1. The creation of a system of family courts with behavioural scientists and social workers to

conduct investigations and make recommendations to the judge.

2. Appointment of an attorney to represent child.
3. Increased consideration of child's stated preference.
4. Clarification of "best interests", rather than automatic preference to one parent on the basis of sex.

Cardwell (1975) expresses a very similar point of view, stating that "only when fathers are put on the same plane as mothers can the children be assured of economic, educational and emotional security" (p.234).

Steinzor (1969) considers it a mere "notion" that mothers are better suited than fathers for child-rearing. "Does it make any difference to a child whether the parent who comes home at night is the father or mother, so long as the person who cares for him during the day is interested and warm-hearted and so long as the parent who comes home at night looks forward to seeing him?" (p.72).

The movement away from the tender years doctrine, as described above in the US, has as yet not reached South Africa. As a general rule, in South Africa custody of young children (and of girls of any age) is granted to the mother. "It is a truism that a mother's affection is better adapted to the care of a young child than father's" (Hahlo, 1975). However, where the mother's character or history are such as to render it undesirable to leave the children in her care, or where the home and circumstances of the father are more satisfactory than hers, custody will be given to him (e.g. *Mayer v Mayer*, 1974). Thus up until the present time it in effect tends to remain necessary, according to South African law, for the father seeking custody to show the mother to be unfit as custodial parent, and himself as the more suitable custodian.

2.1.6 Further definition of "best interests of the child"

In April, 1971, the Michigan Law known as the Child Custody Act of 1970 became effective in the US. Written with the help of behavioural scientists, the Act defined the "best interests of the child" as the total of the following ten factors, which were to be considered by the court (Benedek, 1972):

1. Love, affection and other emotional ties between competing parties and child.
2. Capacity and disposition of competing parties to give child love, affection and guidance and to continue to educate and raise child in his religion or creed if any.
3. Capacity and disposition of competing parties to provide child with food, clothing, medical or other remedial care.
4. Length of time child has lived in a stable, satisfactory environment and desirability of maintaining continuity.
5. Permanence, as a family unit, of the existing or proposed custodial home.
6. Moral fitness of competing parties.
7. Mental and physical health of competing parties.
8. Child's home, school and community record.
9. Reasonable preference of child, if considered old enough to express this.
10. Any other factor considered by the court to be relevant to a particular child custody dispute.

Benedek expresses the hope that this extensive list would discourage a judge from placing undue emphasis upon any single factor. The key to effective implementation of the Act is the capacity of the court to extract relevant evidence and to evaluate this in terms of the above ten factors (Benedek & Benedek, 1972). The court in Michigan has been given the flexibility to meet the needs of each child through individual case studies. A

further provision in the law specifically enables the court to call upon the expertise of behavioural scientists and other professionals.

Benedek and Benedek point out that an important corollary to the Act is the withdrawal of automatic award of children under 12 to the mother. They state that while the best interests of children, especially young ones, will frequently continue to dictate that they be placed with their mother, "this was perhaps more nearly a universal truth during an era when the mother's only role was considered to be the care and feeding of her brood" (Benedek & Benedek, 1972, p.829). They point out that the former law had the "tragic effect" of discouraging some fathers to whom custody should have been awarded, from even seeking it, and of denying those who did, success in their application. Benedek and Benedek state that in the past, because of the fact that promiscuity emerged as the classic means by which to deprive the mother of custody, the term "unfit mother" came to be associated with low sexual morals and in this way the old law encouraged the parties to "wage custody battles in the gutter". The new Act, by calling for a party seeking custody to bring forth evidence to establish his relationships with his children, adopts a more positive approach.

Watson (1969), looking at the problem from a different viewpoint, lists 14 recommendations for insuring that the child's best interests will be met. Among these are:

To insure a correct initial custody decision which can be safeguarded against later modification.

Appointment of counsel to represent the child's interests.

Reduction of delay in resolution of custody cases.

All relevant parties should be adequately evaluated psychologically.

The children themselves, depending upon age and emotional maturity, should be told as much as possible about the procedure, so as to better understand their plight. Watson stresses that lawyers should never underestimate a child's capacity to fantasize all sorts of bizarre facts surrounding a divorce; for example, it is common for a child to believe that his own behaviour led to the marital breakdown.

Custodial arrangements should be made as satisfying as possible for both parents, bearing in mind that it is they who will be responsible for the mechanics of the arrangements. This may involve helping parents to secure psychological assistance.

Watson urges for communication between the two professions, law and psychiatry. He considers that information about child development and personality is essential to decision-making in custody cases.

The issue of access should be carefully handled in a way least traumatic for the children. He contends that every child has the need to identify with members of both sexes, and to have ongoing relationships with both parents.

He recommends that the presumption in favour of mother as custodian should be limited to children of under ten and to all girls. Boys of over 15 should go to father.

Watson's last recommendation would be challenged by Benedek and Benedek (1972), and others in the field (see 2.1.5).

Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (1973) have put forward certain important concepts and recommendations relating to child placement and the "best interests" of the child. They start with a definition of the important distinction between biological and psychological parent/child relationships, showing how emotional attachment between child and parent develops out of daily attention to physical needs, nourishment, comfort, affection and stimulation. Although it usually follows that the biological parent becomes the child's psychological parent, this is not necessarily always so. Thus an absent biological parent may remain or become a stranger to the child, while the

adult who is in daily interaction with the child, and who performs nurturant tasks relating both to his physical as well as his emotional needs, becomes the "psychological parent". This concept was also discussed by Foster and Freed (1964, p.437), and, among others, by Hudson (1970).

Goldstein et al. strongly recommend the use of certain guidelines in child placement. One of these relates to the importance of continuity of relationships for a child. They consider that "continuity of relationships, surroundings and environmental influence are essential for a child's normal development" (p.31). They illustrate the consequences, in terms of behavioural disturbances, arising out of a break in continuity with the psychological parent at various developmental stages, from infancy to adulthood. The implication of the guideline of continuity for custody decisions is that such decisions should be final and unconditional. The authors thus echo the view expressed by Foster and Freed (1964), Watson (1969), Benedek (1972) and many other people in this field. The court's retention of jurisdiction over custody decisions invites opportunities for challenges or appeal by the disappointed parent, and as such is in conflict with the child's need for continuity. Dembitz (1974), whilst agreeing with the importance of continuity in custody cases, states strongly that this principle cannot be adhered to without due regard for changes that may occur either in the custodial parent's ability to meet child's needs, or to circumstances in general. For example, the custodial parent may become alcoholic, remarry a spouse who is rejecting to the child or in many more ways become less able to meet the child's needs than at the time of the custody decision.

Another guideline put forward by Goldstein et al. relates to the fact that there is a tremendous difference between

the adult's sense of time and that of the child. Time has different meanings for children at different stages of development. "A child will experience a given time period not according to its actual duration measured objectively by calendar and clock, but according to his purely subjective feelings of impatience and frustration" (p.41). Applying this guideline to the law insofar as custody disputes are concerned, the writers urge that such decisions should be resolved "by separate and accelerated proceedings prior to and without waiting for a determination on the merits of the divorce or separation action itself" (p.47). In other words, like Watson (1969), they are suggesting that the child's placement be treated by the court as a matter of urgency.

Goldstein et al. point out that the law on its own has "neither the sensitivity nor the resources" to supervise ongoing interpersonal relationships between parent and child, neither does it have the capacity to predict future events and needs in the life of the child. They also criticise the system of imposing upon the custodial parent special conditions for child care, which they feel could lead to harmful and threatening discontinuity.

The authors stress that it is important to bear in mind that a child whose future placement must be determined by litigation has already been deprived of his best interests.

The task of the court is thus to "salvage as much as possible out of an unsatisfactory situation" (p.63). They maintain, as does Watson, that the child should have full party status and the right to be represented by counsel. This is in agreement with a widespread movement in the US urging legal representation for the child in matters of disputed custody (see 2.5).

Summary and comment:

In this section an attempt has been made to outline some of the guidelines commonly considered by courts in custody cases in order to serve the best interests of children. That there has been, and still is, a great deal of confusion and dissention in the application of these guidelines, cannot be disputed. Certainly, no hard and fast rules emerge which can be applied to every case. For instance, an examination of the guidelines raises the assumption among others, that children, especially adolescents, are better placed with the same-sex parent. This appears to introduce two possible areas of conflict:

- (i) It appears to present a loophole for later modification to existing custody arrangements, and as such could interfere with the child's need for stability and continuity. For example, upon the advent of adolescence, should the custody of a boy be changed to father notwithstanding the fact that in accordance with the tender age doctrine he had been with his mother up till then?
- (ii) Would not rigid adherence to the tender age and same-sex parent guidelines implicitly carry with it "splitting" of siblings between the parents? In order to avoid such confusion, the need for careful scrutiny of each case on its own merits has been emphasized by many people in the legal and psychiatric professions.

The abysmal lack of empirical research into the implications of varying custody orders upon children becomes all too obvious upon reviewing the available literature in this area. As Weiss (1975) says, "At this point we simply do not know what difference it makes to children of different ages to be subjected to any of the wide variety of possible arrangements" (p.171).

2.2

ACCESS

An inevitable consequence of divorce involving children is that in the majority of cases one parent becomes the custodian and the other the non-custodial parent.

Clearly, those cases in which a parent abandons spouse and children would not fall under discussion here. The continuing relationship between child and non-custodial parent is made possible on the basis of "access" or, as it is known in the US, "visitation". A typical access arrangement is for the non-custodial parent to see the child alternate weekends, and alternate long and short vacations. It is generally accepted practice to grant access to the non-custodial parent; access rights are refused only where it is felt that the child could suffer serious emotional or physical harm as a result thereof (Hahlo, 1975).

Decisions relating to access and custody present judges with some of the most difficult problems encountered in the family law field. As is the case with custody, there is by no means complete agreement within the legal, psychological and psychiatric professions in regard to access. Issues debated are the basic question of whether or not access is desirable at all, as well as the form that it should take.

2.2.1

Access or no access

Viewpoints range from those who consider it crucial to the child's psychological development for contact with the non-custodial parent to be maintained (Littner, 1973), to those who have grave doubts about the wisdom of exposing children to two different, and frequently mutually antagonistic, lifestyles (Hunt, 1968; Goldstein et al.,

1973). Looked at from the parent's point of view, opinions have also differed widely:

Goode (1956) has found access to be an area in which the divorcée can expiate guilt feelings about previous treatment of her ex-husband, that is, by allowing liberal access she is able to feel that she is being "fair".

Mortlock (1956) on the other hand, shows how, by making difficulties in respect to access, women develop one of their chief weapons with which to punish men. The father finds that impediments continually arise to interfere with access to his children: times are changed with little warning, dates are altered, holiday arrangements held up until the last minute. This leads in turn to "... an ugly piece of litigation over children and indeed everything else which has previously been agreed, the husband taking the view that if the wife is going to make things difficult for him he will make them difficult for her" (p.139).

2.2.2 Extent of access

As is true of custody decisions, there is no set of rules that can be applied to each and every case concerning access. Viewpoints vary from one end of the continuum, recommending no access whatsoever, through a middle path of regulated, fixed-time or reasonable access, to the other extreme of completely unrestricted or free access.

As long as two decades ago Gardner (1956) stated the view that access should not be restricted to occasional single days or weekends, or to one or two holidays a year. He felt that such visits merely resulted in a compulsion on

the part of the non-custodial parent to shower gifts on the child. The child returned from such visits with no real appreciation of the real worth of this parent and with no feeling that the parent loved him for his own sake. Although Gardner stated that visits should be long enough for the child to feel that he really belonged to the other parent and to feel that there could be a meaningful continuity of this relationship, he failed to offer any practical suggestions as to how this could be achieved.

Cage (1970) lists four alternatives available to the court in granting access to the non-custodial parent. These are :

1. Access may be denied.
2. Access may be limited to specific times and places (regulated).
3. Access may be granted for "reasonable" times and places.
4. The divorce decree may be silent on access, that is, it is not even considered.

He points out that the fourth alternative may come about because of the long-established rule that the parent's right of "reasonable" access exists even in the absence of a specific decree to this effect. Thus, by remaining silent the court is in effect granting "reasonable access". Cage advocates that when the court determines that limitations and safeguards on access privileges are required, these should be set out in the divorce decree.

In the same way that custody awards are made on the basis of circumstances operating at the time of the divorce, so are access rights made according to existing circumstances. Cage points out the likelihood of changes occurring which could lead to modifying access arrangements, particularly if children are very young at the time of the original

decree. The original divorce court has continuing jurisdiction to enforce access rights even when the divorce decree has been silent in regard to access. In order to have access altered by the court, there must be evidence of a change in circumstances, although this need not be as serious as that required to have custody altered.

As stated by Sanctuary and Whitehead (1970): "Access may be unreasonably denied, wisely prevented, or dangerously abused" (p.134). They tentatively suggest that problems could be reduced for children following parental divorce if more access were allowed to the non-custodial parent. They maintain, as did Gardner (1956) that when access is restricted the non-custodial parent resorts to behaviours such as lavishing presents and treats upon the child, which in turn infuriate the custodial parent. They explain these behaviours as stemming from the non-custodial parent's desire to demonstrate love to the child, and also from guilt feelings toward the child, at seeing so little of him. The authors, whilst acknowledging that presents are occasionally given in an attempt to win affection away from the custodial parent, consider this to occur in only a minority of cases. They suggest that if access were more liberal, presents might decrease. They make the point that even at its best, access is unsettling for children. As children grow older their lives become increasingly busy, and social and scholastic needs assume an ever-increasing importance: this is in contrast to the younger child's need for contact with his parents. Set (regulated) access by non-custodial parent, such as fixed days or weekends, may put the child at a disadvantage, leaving him too little time to do all he has to, or forcing him to make an invidious choice, such as whether to spend the day with his father or take part in a sports event. Sanctuary and Whitehead urge that parents should show restraint in their demands with regard to access. According to Watson (1969) visitation arrangements should provide

the child with as much contact as possible with both parents "provided this does not augment internal conflicts" (p.70). He is of the strong opinion that the "loss of easy access to both parents is one of the principle tragedies of the disrupted marriage" for children (p.85). Gardner (1976) suggests that there is a greater chance of maladjustment in children of divorce if the absent parent is uninvolved with the child. He regards satisfactory access arrangements as a vital aspect of post-divorce adjustment.

A contrasting viewpoint is presented by Hunt (1968), who, whilst not suggesting that access should cease, shows how children, by virtue of continued contact with the non-custodial parent, are exposed to two differing life styles and sets of values. This viewpoint is expanded by Goldstein et al (1973) who oppose the granting of "reasonable visitation rights" to the non-custodial parent. They recommend that the non-custodial parent should have no legally enforceable right to visit the child, but that the custodial parent should have the right to decide whether or not such visits are desirable. It is their conviction that children have difficulty in maintaining contact with two "psychological parents" (see 2.1.6) who are not in positive accord with each other. Access frequently leads to a continuation of turbulence between the parents and is as a result disturbing to the child. The loyalty conflicts so frequently experienced as a result of visitation "may have devastating consequences by destroying the child's positive relationships with both parents" (p.38). These authors consider that access leads to disruption of continuity (2.1.6) for the child. They are convinced that the upheaval caused by continued contact with the non-custodial parent outweighs the possible advantages of such a relationship.

Dembitz (1974) describes as "blinkerred and untenable" the above proposals put forward by Goldstein et al regarding

access. Although she agrees that in many cases visitation may be disturbing to both child and custodial-spouse, she states that against this must be weighed the child's feeling of rejection arising out of the disappearance from his life of the non-custodial parent. Furthermore she cautions that if one were to adhere strictly to the proposals set out by Goldstein et al regarding access, it could be to the child's detriment, because the continuing contact with non-custodial parent may in fact meet some of his important psychological needs.

In marked contrast to the above writers, Littner (1973) considers it crucial from the psychological point of view that contact between child and non-custodial parent be maintained. He gives five reasons for stating this:

1. Maintaining contact helps child deal with unconscious fantasies about the absent parent.
2. Contact with the "other" parent helps to decrease child's feelings of rejection and abandonment.
3. Fears that parents' estrangement was caused by his being bad are decreased.
4. Contact with the other parent will minimize child's fear that he may never see that parent again.
5. The child needs to have living experiences with both parents for normal emotional development. The child who is brought up by a single parent and who, therefore, has few actual experiences with an adult of the opposite sex to this parent may experience great difficulty with regard to his sense of gender identity and with his specific sexual feelings.

Littner goes so far as to recommend that even when the child expresses the desire not to see non-custodial parent, or when he is on bad terms with this parent, it is still important for contact to be maintained. Furthermore, he advocates that even where the non-custodial parent is psychotic or violent, visits should nevertheless be arranged. The rationale underlying this somewhat extreme

viewpoint is that it is better for the child to know his real parents than to build up fantasies about them. Thus, in his opinion, if courts stopped unsuccessful visits, this would lead to the child suppressing his feelings, and would ultimately cause him more emotional difficulties.

Payton (1971) explores effects of varying orders of access and concludes that a suitable access arrangement will give both parents adequate time with the child, in such a way that the visits are not harmful to the child's welfare. In the absence of bitterness between parents, he would appear to favour free access. He acknowledges, however, that this cannot generally be decreed by the court, because of continuing hostilities and problems between parents. As a result, the parent's right of access is usually safeguarded by a definite provision.

Westman (1972) considers that children of school-age are old enough to have an important voice in access arrangements. He points out that the court tends to view access as an exercise of parental rights for contact with children, without reference to the children themselves. He contends that the quality of the non-custodial parent/child relationship is far more important than actual amount of time spent together. "Routinized obligated weekend visits" can be difficult for both parent and child. Westman stresses that communication between parents is extremely important in regard to access arrangements. If divorced spouses cannot regulate access themselves, he recommends that an objective third-party should be given authority to "fine tune" these arrangements. According to Westman, access should be flexible and responsive to the child's needs. There should be "enough" contact, but this should not be impractically or rigidly prescribed.

2.2.3 Access for whom?

An inquiry into one-parent families in Canada by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1971) found that many parents were dissatisfied or disturbed in situations in which the absent parent is given access to the children. They concluded that the emphasis in these decisions should not be on the right of the parent to see the child, but rather on the right of the child to have a good relationship with a parent. They recommended that family courts should recognise the significance of access for children and that an attempt be made by means of counselling, group discussions or other methods to assist parents to work out a programme of access which accords with the best interests of the children. The inquiry found enough evidence of distress arising out of access to warrant the conviction that this subject needed more serious attention than it had hitherto received. They felt that access was seldom used with the aim of its beneficial effects on the child's life; rather, all too often it worked to the child's detriment, compounding problems that were operating before the parents separated. The inquiry stressed the need for an intensive study of access, the principal focus being on the welfare of the children.

Cretney (1972) makes a strong point, namely, that although it is a relatively easy matter to state the principle that the welfare of children is paramount, it is the application of this principle that causes great difficulty. Under normal circumstances access is regarded as "no more than the basic right of any parent" (Willmer L.J., 1962). A court will only deprive a parent of access if he is found to be unsuitable to have contact with the child at all. However, in certain cases the principle that a parent must have access is subordinate to the principle that the child's interests must be put first. Cretney, to illustrate this point, refers to a case where a father of "untarnished" character who was deeply

devoted to his 16 year-old son, was prevented from having access. This came about because the boy was determined not to see his father and it was felt that to force access might do harm. The court could not in this case be influenced by the possibility that the child might have been prejudiced by his mother against his father, or by the fact that the ruling might be unfair to the father, but had to be guided by the general principle of paramountcy of the child's interests.

The Divisional Council of the English Family Division (cited in Annual Survey of Commonwealth Law, 1973) has repudiated the formulation that access is a basic right of any parent. Access is seen rather as a basic right of the child, because it is normally in the child's best interests to be brought up with the knowledge of its parents. Hence only where access is detrimental to the child, may it be extinguished.

The concept that access is a right vested in child rather than parent is also expressed by Bates (1974) who advocates that the same right should be given to the "interests" or "happiness" of the child in access decisions as in custody decisions. He feels that many of the acrimonious disputes that arise between parents as a result of access could be largely avoided by making orders for access subject to review at any time.

2.2.4 South African view regarding access

According to Spiro (1971) access connotes the right of the non-custodial parent to see and speak to the child and enjoy its company while in the continued custody of the custodial parent. The underlying principle is that

it is in the child's interests not to be estranged from either parent. If the custodial spouse abuses his position by "poisoning the minds" of the children against the other parent, he may be deprived of their custody. Likewise, if the non-custodial parent uses access to influence the children against the custodial parent, he may be deprived of his right of access altogether, or restricted to seeing the child in the presence of the custodial spouse. Apart from these circumstances, the non-custodial spouse has a right of "reasonable access" to minor children (Hahlo, 1975). There is, however, no clear definition as to what constitutes "reasonable". Justice de Villiers, in *Marais v. Marais* (1960) stated that the aim of "reasonable access" is

"the preservation of some degree of parent and child relationship between the non-custodial parent and the child, for the benefit of both, but in a manner not incompatible in substance with the vesting of undivided control and regulation of the care and upbringing of the child in the custodial parent. On the one hand control and regulation are not in practical essence to be divided under the cloak of definition of access, by an arrangement which places a large portion of the ordinary routine of the child's life at the disposal of the non-custodial parent. On the other hand access arrangements are in the absence of good reason, not to be so confined as to stultify the nurturing of real affection and companionship between non-custodial parent and child". (p.847)

Where details regarding access have not been specified in the original court order, the custodial spouse has the right to determine in what way the non-custodial spouse may enjoy his right of access, but this control may not be exercised in such a way as to deprive the latter of seeing the children. The non-custodial spouse has the right to see the children as often and at such times and places as may be reasonable, and the custodial spouse may not impose undue restrictions on the exercise of that right. The court, by virtue of its capacity as upper

guardian of all minors, has the right to vary an access order after the original divorce decree.

In contrast to the example quoted by Cretney (1972) (see 2.2.3), according to the law as practised in South Africa, the "mere fact" (Hahlo, 1975) that the child does not wish to go to the non-custodial parent has been until very recently considered "no reason" for depriving him of access. The only reasons for withholding access are: (1) if the non-custodial parent is not considered to be a fit and proper person to have contact with the child, or (2) evidence that access may be used in order to achieve an improper end.

In an Appellate Division judgment (*Germani v. Herf*, 1975), it was stated that

"To attach decisive importance to the child's own professed intractable attitude ... means that the child is thereby being allowed to frustrate access orders ... solemnly granted by the court as being in his best interests. That surely cannot be right. Generally the correct judicial approach should be that the refusal or reluctance of a young child to submit to access is not by itself a reason for disobeying an order of court conferring such access".

This judge went on to say that in certain circumstances both custodial and non-custodial parent should be entitled if necessary to use force in order to carry out an access order. He went on to order the mother of a 14-year old boy to strictly comply with the court's decree regarding the father's rights of access irrespective of the child's strong negative feelings in this matter, even to the point of applying physical force. Hahlo (1975) in commenting on this judgment, strongly questions the nature of the future relationship between a non-custodial parent and a child who has been forced to see him. He goes on to quote a very similar case in Canada (*McCann v. McCann*,

1975) where on almost identical facts as in *Germani v. Herf*, a Canadian court arrived at the opposite result, holding that teenage children should not be forced into access against their will.

In spite of the judgment in *Germani v. Herf*, *Hahlo* (1975) is of the opinion that South African law is gradually moving towards acceptance of access as a right of the child and of the principle that the non-custodial spouse should be given a right of access only if this is in the child's best interests.

Summary and Comment

As with custody decisions, there is a conspicuous lack of agreement within the legal profession as to which access arrangements are best from the child's point of view.

It is clear that the whole area of access is one that requires very careful attention. If this is unwisely handled, then the child, being the only remaining link between former marriage partners, is in danger of becoming the agency through which they can express their mutual resentment.

One of the basic issues requiring clarification is whether access should be regarded as a right of the non-custodial parent to see the children, or rather as a right of children for a continuing relationship with both parents.

Viewpoints concerning access have varied widely. Some

writers (e.g. Watson, 1969; Littner, 1973) are of the opinion that access ensures that the child maintains a sense of identity regarding the non-custodial parent, a feeling of belonging to that parent and of meaningful continuity of this relationship. As such it should be maintained at all costs. In contrast, Goldstein, Freud & Solnit (1973) consider that the disadvantages of access outweigh its positive features.

Indications from the literature are that people from both disciplines, legal (e.g. Payton, 1971) as well as psychological (e.g. Westman, 1972) are gradually beginning to agree that a less rigidly defined type of access would better meet children's needs.

2.3 THE ADVERSARY PROCESS IN CUSTODY DECISIONS

There has been growing dissatisfaction in the US about the adversary process as applied in matters of custody, (Watson, 1969; Westman, 1971; Derdeyne, 1974) in that this approach could result in distortion of the true facts as far as the child is concerned. By its very nature the adversary process requires that counsel should prove his client to be "good" and the opponent "bad". In this way one may lose sight of the crucial issue, namely, that the concern is not with guilt or innocence of the parties, but with the needs of the child in relation to both parties. "... to trust this matter solely to adversary counsel is truly to abandon responsibility for the child's needs" (Watson, 1969, p.59).

It frequently happens, at least in the US, that only material regarded as advancing the case of a client is utilised by lawyers; some professional reports and recommendations may therefore never be presented in court (Derdeyn, 1975). This clearly could be to the detriment of the child. Another pitfall of the adversary system arises when a lawyer for tactical reasons advises his client against agreeing to be seen by the clinician on the "other side"; this refusal to be seen may then be construed by the "other side" as evidence of disinterest in the child. Unless the clinician is able to interview all parties, his report and recommendations are incomplete; however, according to the adversary process at present employed, this is not always possible, for reasons outlined above. (Watson, 1969; Derdeyn, 1975) (see also 2.4).

Bodenheimer (1971) in a critical evaluation of the judicial system in custody cases, stresses that judicial machinery turns very slowly, with the result that many important years in a child's life may pass before a final and stable decision regarding custody is reached. Time-consuming litigation aggravates the adverse impact of

of the divorce experience on the child's emotional and psychological well-being. "Such delay may cause the problem of custody to become one of mental disturbance, mental illness, or delinquency" (p.727). The dangers of delay in these matters have also been stressed, among others, by Watson (1969) and Goldstein et al. (1973).

Bodenheimer underlines the fact that in the US many judgments are made "with full realization that a substantial number of cases will be re-opened in the same court or re-litigated in one or more other courts" (p.726). In uncontested custody cases it is by no means uncommon for a spouse to enter into an "agreement", with the secret intention to petition for modification of the custody order at a future date (Westman et al., 1970). It is precisely this practice that Goldstein et al. (1973) would wish to stop.

Mushin (1973) whilst agreeing that an adversary system may not be most appropriate for determining a child's best interests, underlines the fact that custody decisions do ultimately arise out of a conflictual situation.

Foster and Freed (1964) similarly pointed out that in custody proceedings competing interests of parents are at stake; thus they are, to an extent, adversary, and should be treated as such. However, an award of custody is too vital a matter to be committed to the "vagaries of adversary procedure in its more bellicose form" (p.627).

Summary and comment

There would appear to be an inherent danger in the adversary process, in that a clinician engaged by one "side"

could be perceived as being aligned to that side. This may result in incomplete assimilation of all the true facts of a case. In this way, the adversary system of custody adjudication may fall short of meeting the child's needs. This has led to criticism of and dissatisfaction with the system.

Another difficulty with the adversary system is the inevitable exacerbation of hostilities between the parents; hostilities which are bound to affect the child's future relationship with the parent who loses custody. This is very clearly expressed in a quotation taken from Levine (1976) emanating from an embittered non-custodial mother: "Under different circumstances, I think we could have worked things out. We were adversaries when we began contending custody, and then we got forced into a system that made us even worse adversaries. This archaic system is poisonous" (p.57).

ROLE OF THE CLINICIAN IN CUSTODY DISPUTES

"Recent advances in the behavioral and social sciences have made it obvious that law will be inefficacious, or even destructive, if the courts ignore the consequences of their decisions and neglect the social, economic, and human aspects of complex problems" (Foster, 1966, p.353).

Foster (1956) underlined "... the growing conviction that persons with specialized training and experience ... are better qualified to determine what is in the best interests of the child than even the best-intentioned judge". This is not intended to suggest that the report of behavioural scientists should dictate decisions in custody matters, but, as Foster and Freed suggest, (1964, part ii, p.627) what is needed "is an open-minded skepticism and a willingness to listen to the specifics, as distinguished from the generalities, of the experts". These authors are of the firm opinion that if the best interests of the child are to be served "it is imperative that social and psychiatric information be produced for the guidance of judicial discretion" (p.627).

Several writers have made the point that in custody cases the child's welfare depends upon the judge's understanding of such matters, and that there is among the legal profession a considerable lack of understanding about child development (Watson, 1969; Finlay & Gold, 1971; Goldstein et al., 1973). Watson (1969) expresses this view very strongly in stating that "judicial ignorance of human psychological behaviour is bound to cause results in custody cases leaving much to be desired" (1969, p.62). He urges improved communication between those who understand and have studied the dynamics of child rearing, and the courts that utilise it. He advocates that psychiatrists, social workers or psychologists who seek to provide relevant information for the court's decision-making should know something about the legal issues and values with which

the court must deal. What Watson is suggesting is that there should be certain modifications introduced in the training of both behavioural expert and lawyer so as to give each real insights into the working of the other. Failure of communication between these two professions leads to increase in hazards for children. "Deeply disturbing at best and extremely tragic at worst, this is an area for mental health practice as well as for preventive law" (p.86).

The value of information provided by behavioural scientists has also been emphasized by physicians. Hirschberg (1962) has said: "If the court has available information about the case, the litigants, and the child, gathered by skilled personnel such as social workers, then the judicial work will be easier, and the judgments will be sounder. The cost in time and money will be minimal compared to the cost of mistaken judgement about the custody, which affects the life of the child and his eventual work in society" (p.559-60). Brun (1964) stresses the preventative nature of the clinical examination, which he feels should be carried out by a team, with provision for follow-up interviews. "The child's voice should be heard".

Although the need for inclusion of behavioural scientists in matters relating to custody has been stressed, there are certain pitfalls and problems surrounding his role that need to be resolved.

Selzer & Benedek (1965) by means of a mailed questionnaire, attempted to elicit the opinions of attorneys regarding the use of psychiatric services in their work. Sixty out of 110 attorneys completed the questionnaire. Analysis of their responses revealed a reluctance to use psychiatric evaluation. Reasons given for this were expense to clients, clients' resentment at being sent to a psychiatrist, and psychiatrists' unavailability and lack of interest in legal matters. The authors gained the impression that lawyers

use psychiatrists to help the "case" rather than the client. Finlay & Gold (1971) are of the opinion that the law is often painfully unaware, if not directly hostile, to any attempt at the introduction of psychological principles in the matter of social control and behaviour, extending even to the development and handling of children" (p.83). They feel that there is little evidence from reported judgments that the findings of modern psychiatry are being studied by judges. However, Bradbrook (1971) in an empirical study of the attitudes of judges in Ontario, Canada, regarding child custody adjudication, reports that they generally agreed that the question of custody was a human problem not a legal one.

In accordance with the adversary system of deciding custody issues (see 2.3) it has become common practice for each side to engage their own clinician. This has resulted in a situation of some complexity, bringing forth much criticism of the role of the psychiatrist or psychologist. Two limitations of psychiatric evidence have already been discussed (see 2.3). A third limitation is that when a clinician has been engaged by one of the parents, he frequently tends to take on a role or viewpoint similar to that of the parent's lawyer (Selby, 1973). He becomes, so to speak, "emotionally invested" (Derdeyn, 1975) in one parent, and consequently has difficulty in focussing in an objective fashion upon the best interests of the child.

It is this very issue, namely, alignment of clinicians with one side, that has brought forth much scepticism and criticism regarding the value of their role in legal work, and particularly in custody work. This scepticism is clearly expressed in a leading article in the British Medical Journal (1969) which states that a psychiatrist's opinion often depends in some measure on his assessment of the truth of what he has been told by a person interested in the outcome of litigation: "... psychiatrists have been

judicially castigated for having donned the mantle of the advocate on behalf of the party paying their fees". The article goes on to suggest that one way in which to protect both the public and the professional would be for medical evidence to be obtained from a panel of experts. Watson (1969) points out one weakness in this suggestion: he states that all too often multiple experts are used as a means of delaying litigation. Frequently these examinations continue over a long period of time to the detriment of the children concerned. Not only is the passage of time in itself detrimental, but by being repeatedly examined, children become increasingly insecure regarding their future.

The other alternative to the dilemma arising out of the use of behavioural scientists as part of the adversary system, would be for the court to appoint a consultant, who would in this way be better able to apply himself to his responsibilities toward the child, thereby greatly increasing his usefulness to the court. This idea, put forward in recent years among others by Westman (1971), Finlay & Gold (1971) and Derdeyn (1975)* was in fact expressed by Despert (1953) some twenty years ago: "What is needed ... is a psychiatric service attached not to either side but to the court itself, with the same impartial position as the court, with an unprejudiced opportunity to explore the situation with both parents, and with an obligation to provide the psychological basis for a decision in the interest solely of the child" (p.192). Despert was of the strong conviction that the judge, without the aid of trained workers, does not have the experience to cope with complex emotional issues characteristic of

* A similar idea was put forward as an independent suggestion by Rosen & Abramovitz (1975).

custody cases. She advocated that all cases involving children be heard in courts equipped with psychiatric and social services.

Benedek (1972) stresses that the child psychiatrist should be willing to commit himself and his knowledge of child development to the careful scrutiny of the court. He must be willing to evaluate both parties as well as the children, and advise the court as to the "best interests of the children". He must thus be prepared to assume great responsibility.

Summary

The role of the clinician, with his knowledge of child development is becoming widely accepted in custody decisions. In order to serve children's needs, closer co-operation between members of the legal profession and behavioural scientists has been urged by many writers (Watson, 1969; Finlay & Gold, 1971; Westman, 1971). Problems arise when clinicians are engaged by each "side", thereby creating a flavour of alignment to that side (Derdeyn, 1975). It has been suggested that this could be overcome by engaging one clinician or team of clinicians who would be appointed by the court, instead of by the parties themselves, or by their legal advisors, to fully investigate the case from the point of view of all parties involved (Westman, 1971; Finlay & Gold, 1971; Derdeyn, 1975).

2.5

LEGAL REPRESENTATION FOR THE CHILD

It has already been shown how, in marked contrast to the earlier view of children as "chattel" or property, the view has developed that a child has intrinsic rights of his own (Foster & Freed, 1964; Goldstein & Katz, 1965). This has led to the "best interest of the child" standard for use in custody cases (see 2.1.3). Over the past decade, particularly in the US, a movement has developed which aims to achieve full legal representation for the child as a party in custody proceedings. It has been strongly suggested by some writers that the child's best interests cannot be served by means of litigation involving parents alone (Hansen, 1966; Goldstein et al., 1973).

Some judges in the US have advocated appointing a guardian ad litem for children in custody disputes. The guardian ad litem takes part in the custody hearing and makes a recommendation regarding placement of the children. One such judge is Hansen (1966) who underlines the fact that custody and support of children tend to become matters of bargaining between the parties, with the court "... rubber-stamping the advance agreement of the litigants" (p.1). This has the effect of treating children as if they were mere chattels or possessions of the parties, instead of accrediting them with interests of their own. Hansen is convinced that it is not serving children's best interests to allow their fate to be decided out of arguments submitted by parents whose "perspective is often clouded by the hostility existing between them" (1966, p.8).

The Uniform Marriage and Divorce Act in the US (Levy, 1973; Foster, 1973) states that the court may appoint an attorney to represent a child specifically regarding his support, custody and access. This, although more advantageous to the child than the limited guardian ad litem system, still nonetheless has limitations, in that the child is not made a full party, and also because such a person would

be appointed only at the discretion of the court and would therefore not be available in all cases (Foster, 1973; Goldstein et al., 1973, Derdeyn, 1974).

In April, 1971, the Child Custody Act of 1970 became effective in Michigan, US (see 2.1.6). In Washtenau County, Michigan, the law relating to child custody is implemented largely by the "Friend of the Court" whose function is to protect the child's interests in divorce cases. "Friend of the Court" social workers investigate all custody cases and make recommendations as to placement.

It has now been widely agreed in the US that full party status with representation would be an important step in meeting the best interests of the child (Watson, 1969; Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, 1973; Foster, 1973). Furthermore, the proponents of this view stress that such representation would be able to scrutinise matters relating to support, custody and access in all cases, uncontested as well as contested. This last point is extremely important, for, according to Despert (1953), in 85% of divorce cases involving children, the issue of custody is agreed upon between parties before coming to court. Foster (1966) and Hansen (1966) consider that 90% of cases of this nature are uncontested. This in no way means that decisions reached are in the best interests of the children (Bodenheimer, 1971; Derdeyn, 1974). The true facts may never come before the court in these cases, and all too often children are merely part of the bargain in the property negotiations preceding divorce. The fact that many of these uncontested cases subsequently eventuate in a court battle (Westman, Cline, Swift & Kramer, 1970) would support what the above writers have said.

The concept of desirability for the child to be represented in every divorce action, whether or not custody was contested, was introduced in 1965 by the Wisconsin Supreme

Court (Wendland v. Wendland, 1965). It was conceded that the introduction of legal representation for the child would mean extra time and expense for parties seeking a divorce, "but such expense will be rewarding if the interests of the children are better served".

In Britain there appears to be a similar situation, and a development toward devoting more attention to needs of children in divorce actions. According to Mortlock (1972) "In the overwhelming majority of undefended divorce suits, with the usual reversal of priorities, the position of the children is generally treated perfunctorily, taking a minute or two to conclude" (p.67). According to Sanctuary and Whitehead (1970), in Britain the decree of divorce is not legally made absolute until satisfactory arrangements for care and upbringing of children under 16 have been made by the court hearing the case. The rationale for this is that it is feared that in the divorce situation, which is fraught with emotion, children would be at risk if their future were left entirely in the hands of their parents. In a recent Bill aimed at making further provision for children (House of Commons, 1975) it is stated that where the court considers it necessary in order to safeguard the interests of the child, the said child may be made a party to the proceedings, and a guardian ad litem may be appointed for the purposes of the proceedings.

In South Africa there has as yet been no movement towards independent legal representation for children, although there is an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of acknowledging their needs as distinct from those of their parents (Hahlo, 1975). There has been a recent call (Baskin, 1976) for the establishment of specialised family courts in this country in order to help judges handle clinical and behavioural science information in decisions regarding children. Van der Merwe (1974) has underlined the fact that the courts often have to decide on the future

of children without having the opportunity of examining the results of an investigation of the circumstances. "There is nobody available to present the case for the children".

As with any innovations into a well-established system, there cannot be unconditional acceptance, and the issue of legal representation for the child is no exception. Dembitz (1974) queries the value of counsel for the child. "Except for proceedings where counsel assigned to the child fortuitously is better prepared on the facts or more competent as an interrogator than the counsel for the adult parties, there is little that counsel for the child can contribute, and indeed he often sits mute at the counsel table" (1974, p.461). Dembitz also puts forward the possibility that the lawyer for the child may be biased in the favour of one of the adult parties.

Summary

In the US a recent movement has developed which aims at achieving full party status and legal representation for children involved in custody disputes. The rationale for this is that all too often the needs of the children themselves are lost sight of during the course of heated litigation characteristic of custody cases (Foster, 1973; Goldstein et al., 1973). Furthermore, it is advocated that all custody cases, uncontested as well as contested, be scrutinized from the child's point of view (Hansen, 1966). At present the vast majority of custody decisions are reached out of court between the parties, with the interests of the children very likely to be subordinate to bargaining between the parents whose own needs take paramount positions (Foster, 1966; Hansen, 1966).

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE:PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES

- 3.1 Theoretical orientation
- 3.2 Maternal and paternal deprivation studies
- 3.3 Current thinking regarding effects of divorce
- 3.4 Empirical studies.

This review will commence with a brief statement of Erikson's (1950) theory of psycho-social development, Bowlby's (1969) work on attachment and Rutter's (1972) views on bonding. A discussion of theories of family functioning, with particular reference to the writings of Lidz (1970) and Fleck (1972) will follow.

Studies of maternal and paternal deprivation will be considered in terms of their relevance to the present investigation.

An outline of current views regarding the effects of divorce upon children will be presented. This will include a discussion of the concept of emotional vs. legal divorce, and a description of some of the typical problems experienced by children. The experience of "loss" of a parent as a consequence of divorce, as compared to death of a parent, will be considered.

The chapter will end with a detailed review of divorce-related empirical studies over the past 20 years.

3.1 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

3.1.1 Erikson's theory of psychosocial development

Out of a wide selection of developmental theorists from which to choose, it was felt that Erikson's (1950) schema was most relevant to, and encompassing of, the extent of the problem at hand, namely, to establish what happens when there is a change in family constellation.

The present study thus adopts as one frame of reference the Eriksonian view of emotional development as growth of ego together with the quality of ego experience afforded to the child by his immediate environment. For Erikson a child's response to a given set of circumstances is determined by the previous development of ego strengths which will help him to deal with crises and adapt to change (Erikson, 1950; Maier, 1965). Erikson's theory of psycho-social development considers sequential stages through which the child's personality passes. In each developmental phase it is necessary for the individual to come to grips with one particular central developmental task or crisis. Each phase is seen as part of a continuous process of development and as such has its antecedents in earlier phases and its resolution in later phases. Eight developmental phases are postulated. Although this schema is well-known in psychological and related disciplines, the possibility that this dissertation will be read by members of the legal profession renders it necessary to provide a brief description. This will be found in Appendix 1.

Erikson's theory, unlike that of Freud (Maier, 1965), who was concerned primarily with libidinal developmental phases, is very much concerned with ego functioning, and processes of socialisation in the child's development. Thus, while Freud was concerned with etiology or pathology which he located in early childhood, Erikson adopts a more hopeful

approach in his focus upon the successful solution of developmental crises. Erikson's approach allows for scope in the individual to "triumph over the psychological hazards of living" (Maier, 1965).

In Erikson's writings one finds too a departure from the Freudian concept of the family, with its emphasis on the interplay between the child, mother and father. Erikson expands this to include a wider social setting, and is thus concerned with the individual's relationship to his parents within the framework of the family's historical cultural heritage.

3.1.2 Present view on attachment and bonding

The ideas of Bowlby (1969, 1973) on the nature of the parent-child relationship have had a tremendous impact upon child-rearing practices, upon psychological thought in general, and upon decision-making by the courts in custody cases. Bowlby's work on attachment presents a second frame of reference for the present study. Bowlby (1969) focusses on the strong tie, or attachment between child and mother-figure, with the ultimate aim of survival of the species. Although in his earlier writings Bowlby (1946; 1951; 1956) expressed the opinion that it was the natural mother alone who could supply the basis for attachment behaviour, more recently he has expanded this to include any person "who mothers a child and to whom he becomes attached" (1969, p.52). This could therefore include father, grandparents or mother-substitute. It is Bowlby's contention that a close attachment relationship in infancy is crucial to the child's later emotional development. He regards the first three years of life as the vital period for establishment of attachment relationships, and suggests that "... throughout the latency of an ordinary child, attachment behaviour continues as a dominant strand in his life" (1969, p.254). Like

Erikson (1950), Bowlby (1969) perceives the parent-child attachment as becoming weaker during adolescence, when other adults and peers come to assume at least equal importance to parents.

For Bowlby (1969), attachment is seen as the cornerstone of normal emotional development in the child. He relates a sense of security in infancy and early childhood to the proximity of a principal attachment figure. This could be compared to Erikson's "Basic Trust" (see Appendix 1). Threat of losing the attachment figure leads to anxiety in the child, while actual loss leads to sorrow. Coupled with both these emotions is the likelihood of anger.

Rutter (1972) who has carried out a great deal of research in the field of parent-child relationships refers to "bonding" and discusses the vital importance of bond formation in the development of later emotional and social relationships. Rutter (1972) considers it probable that for optimal development to occur, bonds should be formed with people of both sexes. He is, however, primarily concerned with the intrinsic quality of the bonding relationship itself, and to a lesser extent with the sex of the person supplying this relationship. Rutter differentiates between a disruption of bonding, and those circumstances where firm bonds fail to develop, stressing that separation need not be synonymous with bond disruption.

The implications of the work of Bowlby and Rutter for the present study are as follows:

1. "adjustment" in childhood and indeed, in later life, presupposes satisfactory attachment or bond-formation in the early years of life;
2. the crucial point about attachment is the fact that it takes place irrespective of the sex or other characteristics of the attachment figure;

3. once attachment or bonding has occurred, physical separation does not necessarily imply that the bond is disrupted.

Thus, assuming that the child in his early years established close bonding relationships, it is conceivable that the security resulting from such a relationship (or good ego strength) will stand him in good stead for coping with later separation experiences. Furthermore, it is suggested that a bonding relationship may continue in spite of physical separation. In the divorce situation, therefore, even though the child may be physically separated from a parent, it is the bonding relationship rather than the physical presence of the parent, that is significant. In the same way, where a parent-child bond was not established, physical separation from the parent would not be likely to affect the child.

Finally, it is suggested, particularly by Rutter, that the sex of the parent supplying attachment or bonding is not of primary importance; rather, it is the quality of the relationship itself that matters.

3.1.3 Theories of family functioning

"Divorce can be viewed as a critical event which affects the entire family system, and the functioning and interactions of the members within that system" (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1976, p.417).

3.1.3.1 Family functioning in the intact family

In order to understand the effects of divorce upon children, it is important to understand the role of the intact family in the child's development. From the work of Lidz (1970) and Fleck (1972), among others, certain common themes emerge regarding the basic functions of the family.

(i) Parental coalition

The parents are mutually dependent and function as a coalition in child-rearing. Each parent has a particular role to fulfil within the family and in this is supported by the spouse. Among the most important tasks of the father are support and protection of the family, and determining the family's social position, while the mother is primarily concerned with satisfying the nurturant and emotional needs of the children.

The child ideally requires both parents: a parent of the same sex to identify with and who serves as a role model, and a parent of the opposite sex who serves as a basic love object.

Both Lidz and Fleck stress that a parent is not able to carry out his role effectively when negatively perceived by the spouse. An important aspect of parental coalition is the way in which one spouse is portrayed by the other to the children. The basis for parental coalition is established in what Pollack (1965) referred to as the second stage of the marital cycle, when the partners

learn to support each other in their interaction with their children and to accord each other freedom to express individuality and maintain their identity.

Ackerman (1958) also stressed the interdependence of the functions of mothering and fathering. He regarded the reciprocity of the two sets of parental functions as so basic that any change in the functioning of one parent would be immediately echoed in a corresponding change in the other.

Benedek (1970a) conceived of fatherhood and motherhood as complementary processes which evolve within the culturally established family structure to safeguard the physical and emotional development of the child.

(ii) Nurturant functions:

These include meeting the child's need for love and security, as well as his physical needs, and providing him with appropriate experiences and opportunities for learning. Fleck stresses that nurturant functions are "more than just feeding". Erikson (1950; 1964) regards nurturance as an important factor in influencing the quality of "basic trust" that the child develops. It also influences his sense of autonomy and the clarity of the boundaries that are established between himself and his parents. Furthermore, it contributes toward the child's self-esteem as a member of his own sex. It has been shown that for Bowlby (1969) (see 3.1.2) attachment is the most important and significant aspect of nurturance.

Both Lidz and Fleck stress that although the mother is the primary nurturant figure, she will only be able to carry out her tasks adequately if she receives emotional support from her husband. This view was also expressed

by Bartmeier (1953) and by Dicks (1967) who considered that in order for the mother to respond to the child's needs for nurturance, she herself needs to feel cared for and valued in her role. Through his parents the child learns how to love as an adult, because he has experienced adult love towards himself.

(iii) Enculturation:

This is the process whereby the family instructs the child in the social and communicative skills of the culture, and acts as the example for the child of the socio-cultural norms. In this process the transmission of language is vitally important. Fleck emphasizes that the single most important learning instrument is communication. Without learning skills of communication in the family, the child would be at a disadvantage in interacting with the community. By the process of enculturation of the new generation, the family serves society.

According to Benedek (1970a) the transactional processes between parents and children explain the double aspect of the cultural function of the family: it is conservative and conserving in that it secures the attainment of the past; it is progressive in transmitting new cultural gains.

(iv) Generation and gender boundaries

Sex-role behaviour is acquired through identification with the parents who are the adult models. The child has first to become established as a boy or girl member of the childhood generation within the family, and then to establish identity within the peer and school groups (Lidz, 1970).

The way in which the parents maintain appropriate gender-

linked roles in their coalition is extremely important in guiding the child's development as a boy or girl.

Barker (1968) puts this in stronger terms: "It is axiomatic in child development that each child needs a close warm relationship with an adult of each sex if he is to make an adequate gender identification" (p.97).

Traill (1968) sets out the basic functions of the family as:

1. providing the child with a stable home and secure framework within which he can be free to experiment and learn about his world;
2. providing the child with two parental figures from whom he can learn role behaviour and with whom he can identify;
3. providing the child with a disciplinary framework, made up of different forms of support from each parent, through which he learns the norms of social living;
4. providing a safe atmosphere for emotional development, through the give and take of intimate relationships with adults and other children.

Traill points out that in order for a child to grow up into a confident adult, he needs to be able to express feelings openly, whether positive or negative, and for those feelings to be accepted.

Parker (1968) puts stress on the interactional and co-operative aspects of family functioning, which are regarded as being dependent upon the maturity of the key members, i.e. the parents.

3.1.3.2 Faulty functioning

(i) Faulty coalition

Where failure of parental coalition occurs, such as in marriages characterised by disharmony and hostility, the child frequently finds himself in an invidious position between two hostile spouses. The more the spouses devalue each other, the more difficult it becomes for the child to identify with either one of them. One of the consequences of this is interference with the development of a clear sexual identity.

In cases of faulty parental coalition, the child may invest much of his energy in seeking to bridge the gap between the parents, or in assuming responsibility for the marital disharmony.

Fleck (1972) regards as the most severe form of faulty coalition the total absence of coalition, such as when one parent is missing from the family. Among the risks inherent in this situation is for the child to become over-attached to, or over-dependent upon the remaining parent, as well as for the parent to become over-dependent upon the child. The absence of one parent from the home deprives the other not only of emotional support, but also of a colleague in child-rearing. Schlesinger (1969) stresses that absence of one parent places a heavier burden upon the remaining one, in that not only do the instrumental role obligations of the missing parent have to be fulfilled, but also the emotional ones. Lidz (1970) is of the opinion that in spite of marital discord, and even in spite of marital separation, it is possible for the parents to form a reasonably satisfactory coalition with respect to their children. Even in the face of their own differences, they can still support each other in the upbringing of the children, and can attempt

to convey to the children an image of the spouse as a worthwhile person.

Dicks (1967) feels that faulty interaction of the parental pair results in the child becoming anxious, insecure, and deprived, and frequently unable to make a lasting commitment in his own eventual marriage.

(ii) Faulty nurturance

This occurs when either of the parents, but more particularly the mother, is physically or mentally ill; when the father fails to give the mother the support she needs in order to carry out her nurturant role; when the parents are in a state of disharmony, with consequent channelling of energies into their own problems instead of onto the children; or when outside pressures (e.g. economic) are such as to prevent the parents from carrying out their parenting roles adequately. According to Fleck, nurturance is often faulty in one-parent families, where there might be a lack of interaction with the child. The potential damage to the child's personality development in cases of faulty nurturance has been emphasized by many writers (Bowlby, 1952; Lidz, 1963; Fleck, 1972).

(iii) Faulty enculturation

If parent-child interaction is faulty, children may be handicapped in their interactions outside the family, for it is in interaction with their parents that they learn how to interact with their environment.

(iv) Faulty gender-linked roles

When the parents are unable to fill their appropriate sex-linked roles (see 3.1.3.1 (i)), children may experience

problems in the attainment of sex-linked attributes. Lidz stresses that without the security of gender identity, confusion results. This is at the root of many neuroses and maladjustments.

3.1.3.3 Family functioning in relation to Erikson's theory

Nurturance is regarded by Erikson (1950) as the basis for the establishment of "basic trust", through which the child is helped to grow psychologically. Erikson considers that the sense of trust or mistrust is dependent upon the degree of relaxation, confidence and warmth connected with the act of feeding. He stresses the importance of the mother's underlying emotional state when handling her child, and relates this in turn to the support she receives from her husband.

As the child starts to perceive the boundaries between himself and his parents, his sense of trust expands. In differentiating his own behaviour from that of his mother he begins to assert a sense of autonomy. As the child gains in autonomy, his super-ego emerges. Erikson stresses the child's need at this time for sympathetic guidance and support. Much depends for successful mastery of this stage, upon the parent's capacity to grant the child gradual independence, as well as his ability to set limits. The latter relates to the child's need for discipline. If the parent does not allow the child to do those things he should and could cope with, self-doubt grows and he comes to doubt his capacity to become an independent being.

3.1.3.4 Summary

The above outline of positive and faulty family functioning helps in understanding the dynamics of what happens when the marital relationship breaks down, whether or not this culminates in divorce. The importance of mutual support between the parents in creating an optimal environment in which the child develops, emerges very clearly. Lidz's (1970) point that it is possible, even in cases of marital separation, for parents to form a reasonably positive coalition with respect to their children, has considerable relevance for the present study.

3.2 MATERNAL AND PATERNAL DEPRIVATION STUDIES

3.2.1 Relevance of these studies to the present investigation

The dissolution of a marriage inevitably means that for the child there is a reduction in contact, to a greater or lesser degree, with one of his parents. The mode of child-rearing changes from a two parent to a one-parent family, and the child experiences varying degrees of either maternal or paternal deprivation, depending upon which parent has custody.

Most of the maternal and paternal deprivation studies are concerned with severe or permanent deprivation. As such they do not correspond exactly to circumstances operating in the case of divorce, where the child usually does continue to have contact with the non-custodial parent. It is nevertheless important to examine trends in the literature insofar as the effects of maternal and paternal deprivation are concerned, for such trends may influence decision-making by the courts in custody cases.

3.2.2 Scope of the review

It has been necessary to set realistic parameters for this review, due to the extensive work on maternal and paternal deprivation. The reader is therefore referred to a comprehensive review of children in fatherless families by Herzog & Sudia (1973), and to Yarrow (1964), Ainsworth (1973) and Rutter (1972) for reviews of maternal deprivation studies. For the most part, mention will here be made only of trends which could have relevance to custody decisions.

3.2.3 Maternal deprivation studies

Until the 1960's the primary focus of study was the mother-child relationship, the father being virtually ignored insofar as his effect upon the emotional development of the child was concerned.

3.2.3.1 Bowlby's early work

Many studies have attempted to evaluate the importance of the mother's role in child development, but the greatest stimulus in this area came from the work of Bowlby (1946; 1951) who described the pathological processes associated with early maternal deprivation. According to Bowlby's (1946; 1951) earlier writings, the deep attachment that the average child has with the mother is crucial for the development of relationships in later life. Bowlby's (1951) conviction that the child learns to love through the relationship with the mother is the basis for his concept of the "affectionless character". In studying delinquents he found that practically all those with "affectionless characters" had suffered a lengthy separation from their mothers in early childhood.

Around the same time as Bowlby was doing this work, Spitz (1945; 1946; 1949) and Goldfarb (1943; 1945) carried out extensive research on children reared in institutions. Their findings suggested that removal from maternal care had a markedly adverse effect upon the child's personality as well as his intellectual development.

These findings had a tremendous impact. Bradbrook (1971a), in an evaluation of the relevance of psychological studies to the development of law in custody disputes, points out that the movement towards favouring the mother as custodial parent gathered momentum as a result of Bowlby's (1946) findings. The matter however is more complex. Subsequent to the above studies, it was shown that not all children are disturbed as a result of maternal deprivation.

Lewis (1954), for example, studying 500 children, failed to find an association between early maternal separation and specific disturbances. She pointed out that children may also suffer from contact with bad mothers, and suggested that there may be a variety of sources (including the father) from whom they may obtain love and support. In a later study Bowlby himself (1956) reported that of 57 maternally-deprived children investigated, 15% seemed well-adjusted and 22% presented with only minor problems.

Thus the more recent trend has been to conclude that although early maternal deprivation affects some children adversely, a significant number are less affected, or not affected (apparently) at all.

3.2.3.2 Critical age for maternal deprivation

Many researchers have attempted to determine the age at which the child is most vulnerable to the effects of maternal deprivation. Opinions have differed considerably. Skard (1965) regarded the developmental stage of the child, and his changing needs from one age level to another as the single most important factor in assessing the effects of maternal deprivation. She considered that few children of under six months seem to suffer when separated from their mother. Infants of this age are "care-oriented" rather than "person-oriented"; the important thing is that the child receives the necessary mothering, not who provides it. It is the 6 month - 3½ year old group that suffers most from maternal deprivation, according to Skard who considered 7 months in particular to be a critical age. This is when the infant becomes attached emotionally to one adult caring for him. Skard believed that vulnerability to maternal deprivation gradually decreases after 3½ years, until 7 years, at which stage the child is able to fend for himself emotionally even for several months, provided the mother eventually does return.

Bowlby's (1952) opinion regarding critical ages is somewhat different; he considers that the critical age for maternal deprivation ends at approximately 18 months, and that by 5 years of age the child can survive such deprivation with very little damage to character development. Spitz (1946) suggested that it was in the 9 to 12 month period that maternal deprivation leads to "anaclitic depression". Goldfarb (1945), however, considered that children were in fact vulnerable during the first six months.

Bradbrook's (1971) conclusion regarding age vis-à-vis maternal deprivation, based on an analysis of the work of many researchers in this field, including those mentioned above, is that "in all but the most exceptional circumstances, custody of children under 3½ years old should always be awarded to the mother" (1971, p.576).

However, the matter once again is more complex. Skard (1965) touches on the kernel of the problem in asking "Is it the mother love itself which is most important, or certain forms of behavior which others may learn and use in relationship in a child?"(sic) (1965, p.334).

3.2.3.3 Separation or deprivation?

Yarrow (1964) in his review of studies on parent-child separation during early childhood, stresses that there are many varieties of separation experiences with vastly different implications, and he cautions about the dangers in generalising. He points out that in much of the literature, the terms "separation" and "deprivation" have been used synonymously: most studies of maternal separation which have linked maternal deprivation to adverse effects have been concerned with children admitted to hospitals or institutions. The result is that ill-effects attributed to maternal separation have often been due to other deviating conditions of maternal care. Rutter (1972)

in this connection makes the important point that the above studies, although considered examples of mother-child separation, also embrace separation from father and siblings, as well as from home environment. Both Yarrow (1964) and Rutter (1972) caution that one should distinguish between different kinds of separation experiences, as well as between the impact of the event itself, and subsequent experiences. Separation frequently occurs in the context of other traumatic experiences.

3.2.3.4 Can only a mother "mother"?

Rutter (1972) suggests that while warmth or "love" is an essential part of mothering, it is not specific to mothering, and can be equally important in father-child relationships. In discussing attachments, Rutter emphasizes the great individual variation in their strength and distribution, underlining the fact that the main bond is not necessarily always with the mother, and that bonds are often multiple. In this connection he cites a study by Schaffer and Emerson (1964): Studying 18-month old children, these researchers found that only in 50% of the cases was the main attachment to the mother; in nearly a third of the cases, the child was more closely attached to the father. Most of the children showed multiple attachments of varying intensity, although there was usually one particularly strong bond.

Ainsworth (1967), in her study of children in Uganda, also found that nearly all babies who became attached to their mothers also became attached to some other familiar figure. Ainsworth (1973) suggests that although "maternal deprivation" is generally understood as inadequate maternal care, it may more accurately be defined as insufficient interaction with a mother-figure. She points out that there is no guarantee that merely being raised by one's own mother in a family environment will provide sufficient interaction to support the normal development of attachment.

She stresses as extremely important the mother's sensitivity to her infant's signals, pointing out that many mothers are insensitive to their children's needs; others are oblivious to these as a result of fatigue, depression, or preoccupation with other activities.

Finlay and Gold (1971) draw attention to the fact that although much of the literature is concerned with the necessity of maintaining the mother/child relationship, especially during the first five years, there is also evidence to show that this relationship can be extremely destructive, and that under certain circumstances in fact, the child's only salvation is to be separated from the mother.

Schaffer and Emerson's (1964) study suggested that it is the intensity of interaction between parent and child rather than the absolute amount of time spent together that is significant in the development of attachment. This would imply that in making decisions regarding custody, the mere fact of the mother's greater availability (in the physical sense) should not necessarily be regarded as of prime importance.

Rutter (1972) is in agreement with Bowlby (1951; 1969) regarding the importance of attachment for the child. However, whereas Bowlby equated attachment with the mother figure, Rutter pleads for "a less exclusive focus on the mother", saying that "children also have fathers!"

3.2.4 Paternal deprivation studies

"Most people feel they know very well what a good mother is but they do not know nearly so well what a good father is" (Ackerman, 1958).

One of the most serious criticisms of the maternal deprivation studies is that the role of the father in the development of the child was ignored. In order that the judge presiding over divorce proceedings may realistically assess the relative merits and demerits of mother and father as custodial parent, it is essential that he considers the studies relating to the effects of paternal as well as of maternal deprivation.

During the 1960's many studies were undertaken in an attempt to investigate the effects of paternal deprivation upon the child. Attention has been focussed on two main areas of personality development: anti-social behaviour and the development of sexual identity.

3.2.4.1 Paternal deprivation and anti-social behaviour

The studies of Andry (1960), Glueck & Glueck (1950; 1962) and Anderson (1968), among others, indicated that absence of father was a consistent feature distinguishing delinquent from non-delinquent boys. This was in contrast to the earlier view which linked delinquency with disruption in the mother-child relationship (Bowlby, 1946). Gregory (1965) considered that the relationship between same-sex parent and child was more crucial in preventing delinquency, than any aspect of the relationship with the parent of the opposite sex. This view corresponds with the principle frequently employed by the courts in awarding custody to the same-sex parent.

The research of McCord, McCord and Thurber (1962) suggested that many of the effects presumed to result from paternal

absence, such as, for example, delinquency, could be attributed largely to the general instability of broken homes. This point of view is strongly supported by Herzog and Sudia (1973) who stress that one must not take for granted a causal link between father-absence and delinquency, for this apparent relationship could very likely be attributed to other factors, such as stress and conflict in the home, inability of mother to exercise adequate supervision, her psychological and behavioural reaction to separation from her spouse, as well as to the social and economic difficulties of her role as a single parent.

3.2.4.2 Paternal deprivation and sex-role identification

The most frequent hypothesis in studies relating father-absence to sex-role identity is that for boys, lack of a father means lack of an effective masculine identification model (e.g. Lynn & Sawrey, 1959; Hetherington, 1966; Biller & Bahm, 1970). These studies have been regarded by some as empirical evidence in support of the principle that boys should be placed with their fathers. Herzog and Sudia (1973), however, in their comprehensive review of father absence, do not consider that it has been conclusively demonstrated that this impairs masculine identity.

Biller (1968; 1971) has examined the role of the father extensively. He suggests that it is the quality of the father-son relationship rather than the amount of time spent together, that is important for the boy's masculine development. The mere fact of father's presence in the home does not mean that his influence on the children will be good, if the quality of the relationship is poor (cf Ainsworth (3.2.3.4)).

Most researchers have assumed that the father plays a more critical role in the development of sex-role identification in boys than in girls. Only relatively recently

has it been suggested that the father-daughter relationship is of real importance in the social development of girls. Biller & Weiss (1970) state that "it appears that the more a father participates in constructive interplay with his daughter and the more this interaction involves access for her to learn specific activities defining her feminine role, the more adequate will be her identity" (p.82). According to Hetherington (1972; 1973), differences between father-absent and father-present girls emerge gradually with age and are clearly present at puberty. Hetherington & Deur (1971) suggest that father-absent girls do not acquire social skills necessary for appropriate heterosexual interactions and that this becomes especially clear at puberty.

Kohlberg (1966) argues that sex-role identification is a product of gradual cognitive learning, resulting from influences outside the family as well as within it; he does not regard presence or absence of a father in the home as the only critical factor in this area.

3.2.4.3 Paternal deprivation in relation to age of child

Paternal deprivation studies have not clearly related the effects of father-absence to the age of the child at separation (Herzog & Sudia, 1973).

McCord et al., (1962) and Langner & Michael (1963) found more adverse effects in children who were over 6 years when the separation occurred. However, most investigators concerned with sex-role identification have suggested that this occurs before 6 years of age; if the father leaves after this critical period, his absence will have less effect (e.g. Hetherington, 1966). Hetherington (1966) suggests that length of separation from father, rather than age at the time of separation, might be the more important factor.

Rosenberg (1965) and Kohlberg (1966) do not agree with the concept of critical ages for the effects of paternal deprivation. Herzog and Sudia (1973) suggest, furthermore, that the effects associated with father absence may not necessarily be permanent.

3.2.4.4 Need for clearer definition

It is now widely accepted that the consequences of paternal deprivation are related at least in part to the reasons for his absence. Nye (1957) for example, found that separation due to divorce leads to more personality disturbances than that due to the father's death (see also 3.3.4).

It is important to ascertain the quality of the marriage and family relationships prior to the father's departure. Glueck and Glueck (1962) found "lack of family cohesiveness" to be more strongly associated with delinquency than was absence of father. Thus, an extremely difficult problem in interpreting findings on the social and emotional adjustment of father-absent children is the fact that these data may reflect stress or conflict in the home, rather than the effects of a missing father per se. Hetherington and Deur (1971) point out that it is quite conceivable that if the father were a major source of conflict within the family, his absence could well have an ameliorative effect upon the remaining family members.

Herzog and Sudia (1973) emphasize the fact that although children of "intact" homes are commonly used as control groups, very few studies have attempted to assess the quality of father-child contact in these homes.

They also stress the need for careful definition of exactly what is meant by "father-absence". Many discussions of the effects of father-absence assume a clear-cut dichotomy between "broken" and intact homes. These writers point out that there is a very definite scale of father-absence, with permanent absence at the end of the continuum.

3.2.4.5 Discussion

Emerging from a review of maternal and paternal deprivation studies is a lack of clarity and agreement about their ill-effects. Moreover, there appears to be confusion even as to the exact definition of these concepts, which may best be viewed as elements only, in a complex set of interacting factors, rather than all-or-none issues.

Clearly, great caution should be exercised in generalising. There appear to be occasions when separation of a child from its mother would be expected to have negative consequences, whereas in other circumstances separation from father might have more serious consequences. Among the important factors to be considered are the age and sex of the child, presence of, and role of siblings; and perhaps most important of all, the nature of the parent-child relationship in each individual case. As Schaffer and Emerson (1964), Rutter (1972) and Ainsworth (1973) have stressed in their work on maternal deprivation, it is the intensity and sensitivity of the mother-child relationship in individual cases that is most meaningful in determining the strength of the attachment, and subsequently the effects of disruption of this bond. In similar vein McCord et al. (1962) and Biller (1971) refer to the quality of the father-child relationship as being of vital importance in determining to what extent the child identifies with his father, and by implication, to what extent he will be affected by disruption of this relationship.

The earlier studies were concerned specifically with maternal deprivation, all but ignoring the role of the father in child development; the more recent emphasis has been to concentrate on father-absence when discussing one-parent families. As G.E. Gardner (1956) has said: "the prototype of the broken home is that where the father is absent and the mother has sole care of the children" (p.53).

It is important to be aware of the different circumstances operating in the two sets of studies. In the paternal deprivation studies, for the most part the child continues in all other relationships, that is, with mother, siblings, friends and extended family, usually in the same home environment. He has mainly to cope with the specific loss of, or change in, the relationship with his father. In contrast, maternal deprivation studies dealt with hospitalised or institutionalised children; in effect, therefore, they were a measure of paternal as well as of maternal deprivation. In view of this, conclusions as to the effects of "maternal deprivation" must perforce be interpreted with caution; if these studies involved father-separation as much as they did mother-separation, they are consequently of little help in determining whether a child's needs would best be met by mother or by father.

A further reservation in attempting to relate the early findings of Goldfarb (1945), Spitz (1946) and Bowlby (1951) to custody decisions, is the fact that their conclusions were based on cases of extreme deprivation, namely, institutionalised children. In the typical custody case one is not dealing with severe deprivation; neither is one dealing, usually, with a total severance of contact with a parent, but rather with a lessening of, a different type of contact. The child of a divorced home usually continues to see the absent parent on regular or occasional visits. One would not expect from these circumstances anything like the far-reaching effects upon personality as in the case of severely deprived children.

Researchers into both maternal and paternal deprivation have stressed that, important as the bonds with mother and father may be when these are positive, there are indeed times when the presence of a parent can be far more detrimental to the healthy emotional development of children than his/her absence. The need therefore, appears to be away from generalisations, and toward looking at every

case on the basis of its own particular circumstances.

Just as the possible negative consequences of paternal deprivation were omitted from consideration by the earlier writers, so were the positive aspects of fathering ignored. Thus, in examining critical ages for maternal deprivation, researchers have failed to consider the possibility that the father might very adequately be able to take on the role of mothering at these critical ages.

Perhaps Rutter's (1971) observation that "It has not made much difference which parent the child got on well with so long as he got on well with one parent" (p.248) best sums up the situation. Rutter's view is that both parents are important in the child's development, and which parent is more important for any particular child varies with the situation and with the child.

3.3 CURRENT THINKING REGARDING THE EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN

3.3.1 General orientation: Recent views regarding effects of divorce

"If all of us, including divorced parents, could overcome this notion that divorce is harmful to children, all, especially children, would benefit." (Steinzor, 1969, p.40)

Over the past 25 years, with the increase in the divorce rate throughout Western countries,* there has been a growing awareness of the need to examine this phenomenon, and in particular to examine the effects of marital dissolution upon children. In contrast to the paucity of empirical research into the effects of divorce upon children (see 3.4.1) there is nevertheless an extensive body of theory on this and related subjects.

The view that divorce is inevitably damaging to children is still to be found in the literature (Peck, 1953; Kanner, 1957; Kenkel, 1960; Barker, 1968); however, the recent trend is toward a re-evaluation and questioning of this view. A few examples have been selected in order to illustrate this trend.

* In the US 25-33% of marriages end in divorce, with the rate rising to as high as 50% in California (Sugar, 1970). According to Hetherington (1976) if the divorce rate in the US stabilized at the 1974 level it is estimated that over 40% of new marriages will ultimately end in divorce.

South Africa and Rhodesia are rapidly approaching a similar divorce rate. (Report on Marriages and Divorces, 1974). Anthony (1974) states that almost 70% of divorcing couples in the US have minor children and that there are almost 9 million children of divorce in that country. This excludes separations and desertions, which are believed to be of similar dimensions to the number of divorces (see 1.2.1).

Bernard (1956) and Hunt (1968) consider that divorce is just one of the many possible hazards of life facing children. Bernard (1956) refers to the "resiliency" of children in response to trauma, indicating that they commonly experience many traumas throughout their development, most of which are less obvious than the divorce experience. Hunt (1968) expresses the view that children of divorce and children living in intact homes have emotional problems in about the same number and degree of severity.

Some writers suggest that children may even benefit from the divorce experience. Westman and Cline (1971) for example, postulate that the stress and frustration experienced in divorce may strengthen the child's coping skills, his capacity to master stress and the general course of his personality development. "Many basic lessons in life can be learned through being the child of a divorced couple" (p.9). Herzog and Sudia (1973) stress the importance of recognising the one-parent family as a form that exists, rather than as an aberration or sick family. They contend that children in one-parent homes are adversely affected by prevailing negative assumptions concerning that kind of family, and refer to "the independence and coping abilities developed by very young children" in father-absent families. Riessman (1962) and Erikson (1966) have also pointed to the strengths of the one-parent family.

More and more workers in the fields of psychology, psychiatry and sociology are coming to regard divorce as a possible solution to, rather than as an inevitable cause of, problems for children of unhappy marriages. Among the early writers to express this viewpoint were Bossard and Boll (1953) who considered divorce in certain instances to be "a solution which closes a whole chapter of family turmoil" (p.358). Lantz and Snyder (1962) suggested that just as divorce offers the marital partners "another

chance" for marital happiness, so too may it offer the children "another chance" of a more secure and meaningful family atmosphere.

Steinzor (1969) regards divorce as a positive step from the point of view of the children, once a marriage is unhappy. He maintains that the crucial factor in the disturbance of children is the emotional estrangement between the parents, rather than the divorce itself. The same thought is expressed by Westman and Cline (1971) who maintain that children are already in a state of emotional conflict and stress by the time the legal divorce comes about (see 3.3.2). It is Rutter's (1971) strong contention that the child is adversely affected by tension and disharmony in the home, rather than by the fact of the separation itself. In his opinion the latter constitutes a relatively minor element in the development of disturbance. According to Rutter, the longer the discord in the family lasts, the greater will be its effect on the child.

This leads to a consideration of whether it is the divorce per se, or rather the unhappy marriage ending in divorce, that is most disturbing for children; in other words, is it the legal divorce or the emotional divorce that is the more traumatic?

3.3.2 Legal or emotional divorce?

To regard divorce as the relatively brief legal event culminating in the drawing-up of a court decree and consent paper would be to approach the problem in a very superficial manner indeed. It would be losing sight of the fact that divorce is a process, consisting of various stages: pre-divorce stresses which sometimes occur many months and even years before the legal divorce; the crisis of divorce itself; and post-divorce tensions, which may also continue for years. The agents and foils, and frequently the victims of the post-divorce tensions are the children.

Despert (1953) was the first person to talk of "emotional divorce". Her contention was that it is the marriage (which is ended by the divorce) rather than the legal divorce itself that has the disturbing effect upon children. Although emotional divorce always precedes legal divorce, it is not always followed by legal divorce. Support for Despert's contention came from studies in which it was found that children from unhappy intact homes are often more disturbed than those from divorced homes (e.g. P.H. Landis, 1953; Nye, 1957).

Ackerman (1958) also referred to "emotional divorce". He stressed that for every marriage ending in divorce, there are many more in which the partners remain together but are emotionally alienated from each other. Thus although the family unit remains together physically there is in effect an emotional divorce of the parents. Similar views were later expressed by Steinzor (1969), Rutter (1971) and Westman and Cline (1971), among others (see 3.3.1; 3.4.6).

The important implication of the above is that if it is the unhappy marriage that is the most disturbing factor, then it is hardly worth saving such a marriage "for the sake of the children".

The other aspect of this issue is whether legal divorce in fact ends the emotional relationship between the couple. This has been questioned by many writers. Ackerman (1958) stated that there can be no effective divorce for parents who remain permanently tied to each other by their mutual ongoing responsibility for the care of their children. Schwartz (1968) also expressed the opinion that even after divorce, the estranged spouses continue to be bound together through unresolved emotional ties and the biological and social fact of shared children, in ways that can be destructive to themselves, the children, and their new family units.

Goode (1956) provided evidence of continuation of the marital bond after divorce: in his study of 475 divorced women (see 3.4.2), he found that only 50% felt indifferent towards their former spouses; the remaining 50% were definitely involved with them, either wishing to re-marry them or to punish them. Westman (1970) found that further litigation follows 50% of divorces involving children, as compared to only 5% where there are no children.

A recent study by Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1975; 1976) revealed that in 44 out of 48 couples, the post-divorce relationship was characterised by "acrimony, anger, feelings of desertion, resentment and memories of painful conflicts ... " (1975, p.17). Attachments between the couples persisted, and in some cases were found to increase following the escape from daily confrontations. Thirty-four mothers and 29 fathers reported that in the event of a crisis, the first person they would contact would be the ex-spouse.

The above examples illustrate that the emotional relationship between spouses does indeed continue even after dissolution of the marriage contract.

The aftermath of (legal) divorce consists of the years

during which custody, access and financial arrangements are tested and adjusted, frequently causing much pain and conflict to all involved. The present investigation concerns itself primarily with what happens in this period.

3.3.3 Some general difficulties confronting children of divorce

3.3.3.1 Individual differences in vulnerability

It has been shown (3.3.1) that there is a recent trend away from assuming an inevitable relationship between divorce and disturbance in children. Many children do, however, show signs of marked stress resulting from the family breakup. According to Anthony (1975) 15 to 20% of children of divorce can be described as vulnerable.

What determines vulnerability? It has been emphasized (Lidz, 1970; Westman, 1972; Anthony, 1974) that vulnerability to divorce stems from many factors, including age at the time of the divorce, sex of the child in relation to the departing parent, and the child's general level of sensitivity and anxiety. Other important factors include the differential level of attachment to parents, the degree to which the child is dependent upon them, and the degree of his tendency toward guilt, anxiety and depression. Schlesinger (1969) is of the opinion that any study of single parenthood (resulting from divorce) that does not consider the very specific

nature of the relationship between the departed parent and his former family, is meaningless (cf 3.2.4.4).

From what people working in this field have suggested, it is extremely important, in discussing common reactions of children to divorce, to bear in mind that not all of them react in the same way to a traumatic situation.

3.3.3.2 Behavioural disturbances in young children

Since most divorces occur within the first few years of marriage (Westman, 1972; Anthony, 1974), affected children tend to be young. Separation anxiety is common in these children, with typical behavioural disorders including regression, withdrawal, depression, eating and sleeping disturbances, and psychosomatic manifestations (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975; Kelly & Wallerstein, 1976). According to Anthony (1974) a sense of abandonment always follows divorce. This may give rise to the above behavioural problems; over-compliant, ingratiating behaviour, or various forms of acting-out aggressive behaviour, are also common.

Some children tend to blame the remaining parent for the marital break-up, and consequently display hostile and aggressive behaviour; others become extremely anxious and protective toward this parent, or may be afraid to express normal anger for fear of being abandoned once more.

When parents refrain from discussing the divorce, or expressing their feelings in front of children, this could lead to repression and denial (Anthony, 1974). Schlesinger (1969), Westman (1972) and Gardner (1976) are among those who stress the need for more explanation and interpretation in order to prepare children for parental separation. In the absence of this, a commonly reported phenomenon is distortion of the reason for the divorce

with a tendency for the child to maximize his own contribution. Brun (1964) describes the extreme guilt that may be experienced by some children who, because of their particular psychosexual developmental level, had wished for the separation of the parents (see also 3.4.4; 3.4.5).

3.3.3.3 Divided loyalties

One of the inevitable consequences of living with one parent and visiting the other, is a sense of divided loyalties. The more the parents denigrate each other, the more damaging this is for the child who soon learns to play one against the other (Anthony, 1974).

The guilt evoked in the child by access arrangements has been described by many writers (e.g. G.E. Gardner, 1956; Goldstein, Freud & Solnit, 1973). He may feel guilty about not wanting to see the non-custodial parent, or about leaving the custodial parent, or even more guilty about enjoying his outing with the non-custodial parent. (See also 2.2).

3.3.3.4 Difficulties in identification

Vilification of one parent by the other may result in the child perceiving the parent as indeed "bad"; this in turn may affect normal personality development in terms of identification, especially in the case of the same-sex child. Problems with regard to the establishment of normal heterosexual relationships may occur in later life; hence the observation that children from broken homes tend to have broken marriages themselves. Traill (1968) underlined the implications of inadequate identification for future performance as a parent. Mowrer (1932) considered that divorce is often "passed on" from one generation to another, arising out of the fact that many children from divorced homes come sooner or later to reject

one or both of their parents. A similar theme is found in the work of Dicks (1967) who regarded as the most significant factor in a happy marriage the possession of parents who were themselves happily married.

3.3.3.5 Fall-off in self-concept

Wolff (1969) stressed that self-esteem and confidence are dependent on being able to think well of one's parents in childhood. Gardner (1956) considered disturbances in the child's developing self-concept, and his "concept of human beings" to be the two main effects of divorce. He showed how the child's basic concept of self develops from the security he gets from his parents who are his models of human love objects. "One's concept of one's worth of self is inevitably a product of another's expressed need or want" (1956, p.55). He described ways in which the mother's attitude to the child may alter after divorce, as the child in certain circumstances may become an economic, social and emotional burden to her. This may evoke feelings of abandonment, guilt and resentment in the child. Bitterman (1968) succinctly summed up this process by saying that for children whose parents have divorced, there is "an interruption in the process of learning to love and be loved" (p.218).

3.3.3.6 Economic factors

In addition to post-divorce structural changes in the family and the emotional upheaval with its consequent repercussions, a common phenomenon is that the remaining parent, especially if this is the mother, may suffer severe financial depletion making it necessary to seek employment and/or move to a more modest home. Herzog and Sudia (1973) would consider this factor to be responsible for many of the deleterious effects of divorce on children.

3.3.4 Divorce vs. death as a loss experience

It has been said that divorce and death are psychologically similar for children. If one starts from the assumption that the child of divorce effectively loses one parent, then the two experiences do have something in common. However, they also differ tremendously. It is considered relevant to point out some of these differences, for the two experiences have not always been separated in discussions of one-parent families. Furthermore, it is hoped that such a comparison would be useful in emphasizing some of the difficulties facing children of divorced parents (see 3.3.3).

Death is as likely to occur in a family that has previously functioned well as in one that has not. Divorce, on the other hand, is usually preceded by long-standing complex personality disturbances in the parents (Wolff, 1969). Fleck (1972) makes an interesting distinction between families in which the father has died, and where he is away for other reasons. In the former circumstance, the mother is able to carry on with the family tasks (see 3.1.3) with the knowledge that her husband would approve of her behaviour; in the latter, the security of this knowledge is totally lacking, and instead the memory of the spouse is coloured by bitterness and hostility.

After death, the absent parent is usually idealised; his image is kept alive by the surviving partner and is presented to the child with pride and affection (Traill, 1968). Identification with this parent is likely to elicit a pleasurable response from the remaining parent, and is thereby reinforced. This may be in marked contrast to the disappearance of a parent as a result of marital difficulties, where it is very likely that the child will be negatively perceived, and even punished for being like the "bad" parent.

Children of divorce frequently have to cope with continuing anger between their parents. Difficulties engendered by certain custody and access arrangements may produce disruptive effects which are not experienced when a parent dies. In the latter instance the remaining parent and children frequently develop closer bonds.

Another difference between the two sets of circumstances is that in the case of bereavement it is easier for children to accept the finality of the loss, whereas in the case of divorce they may continue to harbour hopes of a reunion between their parents, a hope doomed to be unfulfilled (Kliman, 1968).

In both sets of circumstances, children may have to face the problem of adjusting to the remarriage of their parents; this involves learning to share a parent with a step-parent and perhaps with step-siblings. The child of divorce may, however, have to cope with two sets of remarriage: approximately 85% of divorced people remarry (Anthony, 1974).

Finally, the attitude of society is also relevant. Society tends to treat bereaved families kindly, whereas divorcees tend to be censured. This increases their feelings of resentment, guilt and failure, all of which can be expected to affect their relationships with their children.

3.3.5 Summary

A review of literature over the past two decades reveals a trend away from the assumption that divorce inevitably leads to disturbances in children. It has been strongly suggested that it is the bad parental relationship, rather than the divorce itself, that is disturbing for the children.

In spite of the contention that there is not necessarily a causal relationship between divorce and disturbance in children, divorce is without doubt a traumatic event, certain aspects of which are experienced by most children depending upon factors such as age of the child at the time of the divorce, sex in relation to the non-custodial parent, and the quality of the relationship between the child and both parents. Among the host of problems facing children of divorce are difficulties in the process of identification, divided loyalties arising out of denigration of one parent by the other, conflicts with regard to access, embarrassment with regard to peers, having to adjust to a step-family, or to a deterioration in standard of living.

A comparison between the experience of loss of a parent as a result of divorce and death emphasizes some of the difficulties facing the child of divorce.

3.4 EMPIRICAL STUDIES OF EFFECTS OF DIVORCE

3.4.1 Introduction

"As must be painfully clear, the psychological research that can be considered both relevant and useful to the problems of custody adjudication is minimal. Direct studies of the effects of different types of custody arrangement are non-existent" (Ellsworth & Levy, 1969, p.168).

There has been a conspicuous absence of empirical research relating to the effects of divorce, in spite of a growing awareness of the need for such research. It is only very recently that any systematic attempts to examine the effects of divorce on the child's personality have appeared (Westmen et al., 1970, 1971; McDermott, 1970; Hetherington et al., 1975, 1976; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976).

The specific areas of custody and access have received virtually no attention, even though the need for such research has been repeatedly stressed (Ellsworth & Levy, 1969; Bradbrook, 1971; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974; Weiss, 1975; Derdeyn, 1975; Palmer, 1976; Rutter, 1976).

It is considered that the paucity of divorce-related research justifies a somewhat detailed account of those investigations which have been done.

Studies will be considered according to the type of approach adopted. Most of the studies described in sections 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 were undertaken by sociologists.

3.4.2 Parent interviews

The first and only large scale survey of post-divorce adjustment was carried out by Goode (1956) in the US. Goode focussed on the divorce experience from the point of view of the mother, and did not attempt to answer all the questions that arise in connection with children.

Four hundred and twenty five divorced women, randomly selected from the Detroit County Courthouse records, were interviewed. Eighty-one percent of the sample were white and 19% were Negro. Children were not seen. The custody distribution of the 796 children was as follows: mother custody 94,8%; father custody 2,4%; other arrangements 2,8%.

Many areas were explored, including the conflicts leading to the separation, the emotional impact of the divorce on the woman, her economic adjustment, and the apparent impact of the divorce upon the children.

Among the major issues that Goode queried regarding the effects of divorce upon the children were:

1. whether their subsequent symptoms are a result of the divorce itself, or rather resulting from the "same set of causes that originally predisposed the couple to divorce" (p.307; see also 3.4.5).
2. whether the conflict in the home or the divorce experience itself was more significant;
3. whether there might not be a variety of "divorce" populations, with different experiences having different effects upon the children.

Mother's reports about the effects of divorce on the children

Most mothers in Goode's sample believed that their children had better lives than they would have had if the marital conflict had continued. In general they

did not consider that the divorce had been bad for the children. Commenting on this, Goode made the point that their only basis of comparison was how the child had presented in a home of considerable conflict, that is, a pre-divorce home. He stressed that caution should be exercised in accepting mothers' answers to questions regarding the effects of the divorce upon children. His reasons for this were:

- (a) it was possible that in certain cases the mother was unable to tell the truth;
- (b) she was possibly unable to perceive negative effects on the child as a result of the divorce;
- (c) as his interviews took place a maximum of 26 months following the divorce, there might not have been enough time for the effects to become apparent;
- (d) he felt that in order to really measure the effects of divorce, one would need to compare children living in homes under conflict, homes broken by death, and homes broken by separation.

Goode found that the greater the trauma of divorce for the mother, the greater the likelihood of her children being difficult to handle. Children's feelings toward the father also affected their behaviour; the children in his sample who had never known their father showed less behaviour problems than those who either had always disliked their father, or had loved him less since the divorce. Twenty percent of the mothers claimed that the children "never think about" the father. Goode maintained that this might simply indicate lack of communication between mother and child regarding the father; he was convinced that children always think about their fathers even when he is unknown to them.

Goode's analysis of access

Goode is one of the few people who have analysed in depth the problems surrounding access (see 2.2). His

view is that by virtue of continuing contact between child and non-custodial parent, parents have an ongoing means of "getting at" each other: father makes demands regarding his access rights, while mother has a weapon in threatening to withhold visits, or making them difficult. Access also provides parents with an opportunity to undermine each other in the eyes of the child. One inference that could be drawn from this line of thinking is that children might do better where there is no access at all. This view was later amplified by Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (1973) (see 2.2.2).

Goode found that visits by the non-custodial parent became less frequent with the passage of time. He explained this in terms of the following factors:

1. Finance (visits are expensive for the father).
2. Time (especially if the father lives far away).
3. Access leads to tension between spouses.
4. Change in the social life of the spouses, e.g. re-marriage. The visits lose their importance "as the side goals of malice, punishment, or even love begin to fade" (p.315).
5. Children find that visits interfere with their own social arrangements.
6. Children may withdraw emotionally as a defence against disappointment, such as, for example, if the father misses a visit.
7. As the child's daily activities become less familiar to the father, he may become a less satisfactory companion to the child.

Furthermore, Goode suggested that since it is rare for a young child to understand why his parents divorce, "the haunting suspicion of abandonment" may affect his ability to enjoy visits.

Goode's analysis of the access situation showed considerable insight into the complexity of the mother's attitude

toward visits.

Referring to the mother's perception of the child as "difficult" after visits with father (25% of his sample reported this) Goode considered that this could in part be determined by her own tensions associated with the visit, and possibly by guilt which she may feel in depriving both father and child of their rightful association with each other.

Four factors were isolated as significant in the difficulties encountered in access arrangements:

1. Mother regards her relationship to the child as more important than that of the father.
2. She feels the father has forfeited some of his rights to the child because of his behaviour.
3. With the passage of time, the parents become less willing to make concessions to one another.
4. The father's visits are rarely a pleasure for the mother, and require expenditure of time and energy on her part.

One consequence of these factors is that as time passes, many mothers would prefer to have the father see the children less often, or even stop seeing them altogether. This becomes more marked if she remarries. A further factor in the mother's feelings regarding access relates to the father's support payments. If he pays these regularly she is less likely to want to reduce his visits. Yet another reason for the mother preferring less father-child contact might arise out of her conviction that the father would have a negative influence on the children. Some mothers may view visits as an opportunity to renew overt hostility towards father; conversely, a good way to punish father could be to discourage visits. There are also instances where the mother might be experiencing difficulty in handling the child, and might feel that increased father-child contact would be beneficial.

There are thus many reasons for the mother wanting to increase or decrease access; usually these are unrelated to a simple wish for the child to have less or more contact with the father.

Goode's research technique

Goode's only technique was the direct interview. This technique, used on its own, has been widely criticised as a research instrument (see 6.1.4.1). Goode himself pointed to a major failure in his experimental design, in that he did not do follow-up interviews with his mothers over a period of time, but rather asked retrospective questions. In defence of his technique of obtaining information, however, he stated that "the experience of social research has been that for a wide range of subject matters, good questions and good interviewing will elicit the truth from respondents. It is generally understood that the function of an interviewer is not alone to insist upon an answer, but also to question further, to probe ... " (1956, p.24). He was adamant that the interview is highly effective in research, and that it enabled one to probe deeply into the life of the interviewee.

Goode's study is still considered a basic source of information regarding social and psychological phenomena associated with divorce.

3.4.3 Studies using questionnaire method

3.4.3.1 Retrospective studies

J.T. Landis (1960) analysed questionnaire responses of students from divorced homes. Approximately one third of those who remembered the time preceding the divorce, had considered their homes to be happy; only 22% reported open conflict between the parents. Landis compared those students who had considered those students who had considered the pre-divorce family as happy, and those who had not on the following seven situations, which he considered to be potentially traumatic:

1. adjustment to the knowledge of the impending divorce;
2. adjustment to the fact of the divorce;
3. the possibility that either or both of the parents may "use" the child as a weapon against each other;
4. redefining of relationships with parents;
5. new status, i.e. child of divorced parents, necessitating adjustments within the peer group;
6. recognition of the parents' failure in marriage;
7. problems of adjustment on remarriage of parents.

Landis found acceptance of the knowledge of the impending divorce, and of the divorce itself, to be a traumatic experience for those children who believed their home to be happy. On the other hand, the children who had felt unhappy at home reported relief in reaction to the divorce, and greater acceptance that it was best for all concerned.

The trauma associated with being "used" by the parents appeared to be more severe among those children who saw the home as unhappy before the divorce.

Landis found that divorce seemed to increase the emotional

distance between children and fathers. The students reported feeling closer to their mothers than to their fathers.* He explained this in part in terms of the child being influenced by mother's perception of father.

With regard to adjusting to their new status within the peer group, two-thirds of the students reported that the divorce had not affected their confidence in peer relationships. Once again, it was those children who had perceived their homes as happy who reported greater trauma in this area.

According to Landis, some trauma may result for children who recognise the implications of parental failure in marriage. The children from unhappy homes were those whose attitudes towards marriage had been affected most by the divorce. The implication of this is that it was their reaction to the unhappy home atmosphere, rather than to the divorce per se, that had coloured their feelings (see 3.3.1).

Landis' final analysis was to relate the reported feelings and reactions of the children to the post-divorce status of the parents. This data indicated that marriages perceived by children as unhappy were also those where neither parent, or only the mother, remarried.

Landis found no relationship between ordinal position in the family, presence or absence of siblings and children's perception of the divorce as traumatic. He found that those children who were youngest at the time of the divorce tended to rate themselves as more secure, happier, and less aware of pre-divorce conflict.

Landis concluded from his study that one cannot consider

* Landis does not give a custody distribution for his sample; one assumes, therefore, that these statements are to be interpreted in the light of placement with mother.

all children of divorce as a homogeneous group. In this he concurs with Goode (see 3.4.2). His main finding was that the trauma of divorce for the child seemed closely related to perception of the pre-divorce home atmosphere, those considering the home as happy reacting more negatively to the divorce than those who had been aware of conflicts. For the latter group, divorce might mean relief from tension, and mark the beginning of the child's emotional recovery.

In another study, Landis (1962) compared children from divorced homes, from unhappy non-divorced marriages and from happy marriages. Students were asked to rate the present marital status of their parents, and the happiness of their parents' marriage up till the time the student was 15 years old. Very few differences emerged between children from divorced homes, and those from unhappy marriages; on the other hand, children from marriages described as "happy" were found to differ significantly in their questionnaire responses from the other two groups.

Landis' study thus substantiates Despert's (1953) contention that divorce is not necessarily worse for children than an unhappy marriage (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2).

A certain amount of caution should be exercised in interpreting questionnaire responses, particularly when considering retrospective material. Weiss (1975), in discussing Landis' study, also points to the possibility that those students who rated themselves as unhappy would be more likely to rate their parents' marriages as unhappy, irrespective of the objective reality.

Burchinal (1964), also using the questionnaire method, investigated effects of divorce upon the behaviour of adolescents. His results revealed no significant differences in the behaviour of children from unbroken and

divorced homes. Comparing behaviour of adolescents from intact families, broken families (i.e. where there is only one parent) and reconstituted families (where one or both parents are remarried), he could find no significant effects associated with divorce and separation, or with remarriage of the parents. He considered these findings important in revising "widely held beliefs" regarding the detrimental effects of divorce upon children.

Two earlier similar studies by P.H. Landis (1953) and Nye (1957) were mentioned in 3.3.2.

Reinhard (1971) investigated ways in which adolescent boys and girls differed in their reaction to parental divorce. He also attempted to identify the most common reactions to divorce among middle class white adolescents. A 99-item questionnaire was administered to 18 boys and 28 girls. Areas explored included: reaction upon hearing of the divorce; reaction to loss of a parent; peer relationships; and post-divorce conflicts. No significant sex differences were revealed. Furthermore, the sample as a whole did not appear to react negatively to the divorce. A frequent response among the adolescents was that they considered their parents' decision to divorce "one of the most sensible things they had ever done". Reinhard found in his sample a denial of hostile feelings toward the mother (who was presumably the custodial parent, although this is not specifically stated), and a denial of feelings of estrangement from either parent. Loss of a parent as a love object did not appear to substantially affect the children. Peer relationships were not reported to be adversely affected, neither was there any conflict reported within school or the community in general. The adolescents perceived themselves as having to mature faster and to assume greater responsibilities than otherwise.

3.4.3.2 Current studies

Palmer (1976) has carried out one of the few reported research projects into divorce in Canada. Her study, as does the present investigation, aimed at examining the extent to which arrangements made for children of divorce in fact met their needs. Data was obtained from 291 families with children under 16 years of age, who had commenced divorce proceedings in a county of South-Western Ontario. Using the questionnaire method, information was obtained regarding the arrangements for the 566 children involved, the continuation of parent-child contact and the reactions of the children as assessed primarily by their functioning at school.

Of relevance to the present study are some of Palmer's findings regarding custody and visiting (access) arrangements.

Custody

Palmer found that most parents had come to an agreement with regard to custody before going to court. This is in accordance with what Despert (1953) and Foster (1966) have said (see 2.5).

In Palmer's study, 63% of the children were in their mother's custody, 17% were with father, and the remainder with relatives or in other homes. She looked into the reasons for placement of so many children away from their mothers, and found that these decisions had been based on considerations other than those of the child's needs. The mother's relinquishing of custody was not found to be related to her adequacy as a parent, but rather to her own personal interests, such as extra-marital relationships. Moreover, the usual presumptions about custody, such as that young children and girls should stay with their mother, were not reflected in the custody distribution of Palmer's sample.

Taking the child's scholastic functioning as her index of adjustment, Palmer found that 66% of the children living with their mothers had no problems at school, as against 49% of those living with fathers. From this she concluded that children who are placed with their mothers adjust better. Furthermore, she found that children living with fathers tended to do better (i.e. at school) if the father had established a new relationship with a female.

Access

The most significant finding in Palmer's investigation was that over 60% of the children received no visits from non-custodial fathers, while 44% received no visits from non-custodial mothers. Analysing the reasons for this, Palmer found once again that these usually had to do with the parents' needs, rather than with those of the children. She found that in those cases where there had been a specified court order regarding access, non-custodial parents were in fact less likely to visit their children than when there was no such order. She concluded that although the law attempts to protect the child-parent relationship by setting up rights for access, in practice the strong emotions felt by parents in this regard "have a much greater influence than formal agreements" (p.33).

In order to examine the effects of different types of access arrangements upon children, Palmer again examined this in relation to school functioning. She found an association between good functioning at school, and regular, but not too frequent, visits. (She defines "regular" visits as "at least monthly but less than once a week".) She suggests that while weekly visiting may disrupt the child's life and be anxiety-arousing, on the other hand regular but less frequent visiting assures the child of his parent's interest without disturbing the continuity

of his daily life. Irregular visits, on the other hand, lead to uncertainty in the child. Palmer maintains that it may be better for a child to have no contact at all with the non-custodial parent, rather than to see this parent on an irregular basis. At no point in her discussion of access does Palmer consider what is referred to in this investigation as "free access".

Children's reactions to parental separation

On the basis that "parents are too subjective to assess their own children" (p.19), Palmer decided to obtain information regarding the children's level of adjustment by means of a telephonic interview with each child's teacher. She asked the teacher about the child's behaviour in school, and his academic performance in relation to his potential.

Teachers' reports tended to suggest a greater vulnerability of boys to parental divorce. The majority of the children (63%) were, however, described by their teachers as having no problems. Palmer concluded that children appear to be resilient in the face of family problems, for they continue to function well in the main area in which demands are made upon them. She suggested that this group of children did not differ significantly from those from non-divorced homes.

With regard to the relationship between age of child at the time of the divorce, and adjustment to the divorce, Palmer found that children who were over 10 years of age at the time of parental separation manifested more problems at school. She concluded that adolescence is the most vulnerable age for a child to experience family breakdown, and suggested that divorce interferes with the adolescent's completion of developmental tasks and that the social implications of divorce are more significant at this age. Apart from her findings regarding the adolescent group,

Palmer found no evidence to suggest that the child's age at the time of the divorce was associated with subsequent problems in school functioning.

Two points of considerable interest that emerge from Palmer's study are (1) her analysis of reasons why mothers relinquished custody and (2) her findings that both custody and access arrangements made by parents are based upon the needs of the parents rather than upon those of the children.

The conclusions from Palmer's study regarding the effects of divorce upon children appear to stem from a somewhat inadequate methodological framework. Whilst it is conceded that reports by teachers can be valuable adjuncts to information obtained by clinical interviews and/or direct observation, to rely solely upon the former may be a somewhat superficial way of approaching the matter, more particularly if this is conducted telephonically. When Palmer refers to teachers' reports of "satisfactory performance" in the 0 to 5 year old group, still more circumspection should be attached to what she is saying.

3.4.4 Observations of children at time of divorce

McDermott (1968) was the first person to study a non-clinical population at the time of parental divorce. He discusses observations by nursery school teachers of behavioural changes in 16 children, aged 3 to 5 years, around the time of their parents' divorce. His aims were:

1. to see how often the divorce period is indeed a time of significant stress for children of this age;
2. to see which conflicts and anxieties arise, and how they are manifested;
3. to identify resources utilized by the child in order to adapt to the divorce;
4. to examine to what extent the school is able to assist the child during this period of stress.

Nursery school teachers reported acute behavioural changes in 10 of the 16 children (62%) studied. Eight children responded initially with anger and depression, and with defenses of denial and regression, tending to blame others for their problems. After 6 to 8 weeks, re-adjustment generally occurred. Two children presented with severe regression and disorganisation, which McDermott interpreted as the result of long-standing disturbance in ego development preceding the divorce itself. The behaviour of three children was considered unchanged; these were the children who appeared to maintain a positive relationship with both parents following the divorce.

In general, behavioural changes appeared to be more dramatic and acute in boys than in girls. The girls in McDermott's group appeared to adopt "pseudo-mature" mannerisms as their way of dealing with conflict. Several of the boys manifested an acute and violent reaction to disruption of the process of masculine identification.

McDermott discusses the discrepancy between his finding that 62% of the children presented with acute behavioural

changes following the divorce, and the findings reported by Goode (1956) in which only 18% of mother reported significant management problems in their children. It is suggested that one of the explanations for this could be the fact that in Goode's study the mother was the informant whereas in McDermott's investigation the teacher was the informant. McDermott suggests that in many cases the mother may not perceive changes in her children; this may stem from conscious or unconscious avoidance of the issue of divorce and the responsibility of facing the painful problem of readjustment for both herself and the child. Goode (1956) also acknowledged this possibility.

McDermott concludes from his study that divorce has a significant impact upon, and represents a major crisis for most young children. He draws attention to the difficulty in differentiating the impact of the following factors when discussing the effects of divorce upon children: (1) the direct impact of the strife around the divorce; (2) the immediate reactions to the loss of a parent; (3) the impact of the divorce on the remaining parent, reverberating in the child; and (4) the impact of the loss of a parental model.

Discussing the limitations of his study, McDermott points out that he made no attempt to evaluate home behaviour, that his sample was very small, and that the behavioural changes described in the children could possibly be seen at other periods of their lives, and as reactions to other stresses. He lists as positive aspects the fact that the sample was non-clinical, that findings were based on direct observation rather than on parental reporting, that the reported observations were made during the crisis period rather than retrospectively, and that the study focussed upon a specific age range. McDermott underlines the role of the teacher in detecting, handling and reporting children's problems. The importance of teachers' observations has also been discussed by Rutter (1967).

3.4.5 Post-divorce evaluation of children's responses

The studies described in this section are based on clinical and court populations.

McDermott (1970) studied and compared the intake records of two groups of children under 14 years of age, who had been evaluated at the University of Michigan's Children's Psychiatric Hospital: one group consisted of 116 children of divorced parents and the other of 1,349 children of intact families.

More evidence was found of acting-out symptomatology in the divorce group, with maladjustments both at school and at home. More symptoms of delinquency also appeared in the divorce group than in the intact group. Depression occurred in approximately one third of the divorce group; sometimes this was overt, but more often it was covert, such as in accident-prone behaviour, fatigue and boredom. McDermott regarded the depression of these children as a very complex issue and not a simple reaction to the loss of a parent or family unit. He suggested that the children had frequently not been able to grieve openly for the lost family unit, and that they had turned to acting-out behaviour as a defence against incipient depression. Running away from home, a symptom frequently encountered, could possibly represent an appeal for attention, or a need to make people aware of the child's sense of abandonment.

McDermott found in the divorce group a marked tendency to interpret the divorce as an act of parental hostility, or for the child to assume personal responsibility for it. These feelings were reinforced by parental arguments over support payment.

There appeared to be an unconscious need in both child and mother to recreate the lost father through the child's

identification with his traits, leading to the conflicts between mother and child which brought them to treatment. The parent-child struggle was often strikingly reminiscent of the original mother-father struggle. In many cases the mother projected a superimposed image of the father onto the child, determined to prove him delinquent, lazy, stupid and bad.

Biller (1971) looked into this area very carefully and concluded that maternal attitudes toward the absent father are of critical importance in the child's personality development. For example, a mother's consistently derogatory comments about the absent father can contribute toward the development of a negative self-concept in the son. The father-child relationship prior to the father's absence, and the child's age at the separation of his parents are important factors in determining the extent of the influence of maternal attitudes toward the absent father. Thus, the father-absent boy who has had a positive relationship with his father up till 10 years of age is less likely to be influenced by negative maternal views about the father, than the boy who has not experienced such a relationship.

McDermott similarly considered the child's developmental stage as important in determining the symptoms manifested in reaction to the divorce. For example, he suggested that normal super-ego development is likely to be interfered with if the divorce occurs at a crucial point in its formation.

McDermott concluded that the disruption caused by divorce continued to upset children for a considerable length of time. Apart from the trauma associated with the divorce itself, a more prolonged trauma exists, preceding the divorce, and persisting thereafter. He stressed that the legal system provides very little help for handling the consequences of divorce, and pointed out that although

the law (i.e. in the US) has moved from the concept of guilt and innocence in divorce actions, for the children, this polarity is often still very real. He emphasized the strong need of vulnerable children for sensitive assessment by mental health professionals within the framework of the family court at the time of the divorce (see 2.4). Such intervention, which should include a carefully conceived plan of custody, could go a long way toward prevention of later disturbances.

McDermott pointed out certain limitations in his study. Firstly, as the material had been gathered a long time prior to, and independently of the study, certain vital information, such as length of time between the divorce and the evaluation, and age of the child at the time of the divorce, was not available. Secondly, individual case records contained an uneven amount of divorce-related data. Furthermore, many of the "intact" group also came from seriously unstable homes. Many variables, including the effect of parental remarriage, presence of siblings, step-parents, or move to a new home, remained unexplored. Finally, in discussing the psychiatric sequelae of divorce on children, he cautions about generalising from findings on a clinic population to the much larger numbers of children from divorced homes who are not psychiatric patients.

Morrison's (1974) findings differ somewhat from McDermott's. In his investigation of parental divorce as a factor in childhood psychiatric illness, Morrison examined two groups of children and parents who had been referred to a psychiatric clinic. One group was from divorced or separated homes, and the other from "intact" homes. He found only slightly more antisocial symptoms in the divorce group. More than half the parents in this group were found to be psychiatrically disturbed. This led to the suggestion that divorce may be a symptom of parental

illness, and that this may operate genetically and environmentally to produce illness in the child. Morrison found no clear-cut relationship between marital status of parents and behavioural disorders in children. Furthermore his findings do not support McDermott's (1970) contention that children react to divorce by depression.

Westman, Cline, Swift and Kramer (1970) reviewed 148 divorce cases passing through the Dane County Family Court. They found that 52% of the 105 divorces involving children were followed by legal contests. Approximately one third of this group showed evidence of repeated and intensive interaction between the divorced couple for a two year post-divorce period. These couples remained embroiled in their post-divorce conflicts, using the children as pawns with which to punish each other; they constituted the "turbulent" group. The remaining two-thirds of divorces involving children were not turbulent in nature. Westman et al. considered the turbulent group to be pathogenic for the children. They described four types of turbulence in the post-divorce period:

- (a) Parent-centered turbulence, in which parents continue to discredit each other.
- (b) Child-centered turbulence, where children manipulate parents to perpetuate their conflicts, or possibly aim to reunite their parents.
- (c) Parent-child turbulence, where one parent and child team up on the other.
- (d) Turbulence inspired by relatives, e.g. "meddling in-laws".

Westman et al. (1970) then interviewed 153 cases seen at the University of Wisconsin Child Psychiatric Clinic. Of these 23 (15%) had experienced divorce. A post-divorce background of total separation and loss of contact with one parent, usually the father, was found in 15 of these cases. In eight cases there was evidence of post-divorce

turbulent interaction between the divorced couple. It is of interest to note that in none of the 23 divorce cases was there a divorce history of mutually satisfactory arrangements between ex-spouses. Westman et al. concluded that the psychiatrically disturbed children come from divorces followed by parental conflict, or by complete loss of contact with one parent, but not from families where there has been a reasonably implemented divorce settlement.

The important implication of these findings is that most children experience divorce without being embroiled in a turbulent relationship between their parents, and without requiring psychiatric help. The experience of the divorce itself would appear to be less pathogenic than the nature of the parents' personalities and their relationship with their children.

Westman et al. (1970) found that the disturbed children tend in general to distort the explanations of the divorce, particularly maximising their own contribution to it, and continuing to wish for a reunion between their parents, even when remarriage to other partner/s had occurred. The exaggerated fantasies of the children concerning their own part in causing the divorce are reinforced by the post-divorce financial bickering, leading them to assume that the cost of their own living expenses was a significant factor in the marriage disintegration and departure of father. McDermott (1970) reported similar findings.

Westman et al. looked more closely at the 23 clinic cases, from the aspect of when the divorce had occurred. They found that in only three cases the divorce had occurred during the two years preceding referral. In most cases, separation occurred more than two years before referral, and before age 5. It appeared that children were not referred for help in the immediate aftermath of divorce.

Westman (1972) stresses the need to establish the time in the child's life when the divorce takes place, "since divorce clearly means different things to children at different ages" (1972, p.2). He discusses four developmental stages: infancy, early childhood, school age, and adolescence, and describes the effects of divorce expected at these times.

Infancy: In this stage mother is the primary caretaker. Absence of father during this period usually has only indirect effects upon the child, unless for any reason the mother is not able to meet his needs, and unless she perceives the baby's birth as a precipitating factor in the divorce. If the mother is not able to meet the infant's needs for comfort and trust at this stage, he may be permanently impaired in his relationships with people (cf. Erikson, 1950; Bowlby, 1969).

Early childhood: Most divorces occur during this period, when the effect on the child's personality development is greatest, for it is at this time that the basis for future interpersonal relationships is formed through interaction with mother, father and siblings. Particularly important is the successful resolution of the oedipal stage. Westman considers this to be the time when the father is most needed by both boys and girls, and the period most critical for gender identification. During the oedipal stage boys are able, on a day-to-day basis, to work through their anger toward the father for his intrusion in the mother-son relationship; gradually the boy discovers the advantages of being like the father. The father's disappearance from the scene as a result of divorce confirms the boy's fantasy of omnipotence and at the same time leads to profound guilt. For children of both sexes, departure of the father during this period inevitably becomes associated with rejection. This can have serious repercussions on the child's self-esteem. (This was also suggested by Landis' (1962) study). The father's departure

may also affect the girl's later sexual adjustment in that she may experience it as rejection by her first "lover". This may be compounded by the fact that the mother may also be doubting her own capacity to have a lasting relationship with a man.

In young children, following parental separation, symptoms of depression may take the form of disturbances in eating, sleeping and toilet functions, behavioural and psychosomatic problems (cf. McDermott, 1970).

School age: During the latency years children actively identify with adults of both sexes. Knowing how to live with the qualities of the opposite sex in oneself, "requires an apprenticeship with adequate models" (p.6). Children in one-parent homes are at the mercy of cultural stereotypes because of limited exposure to "real" identification figures of both sexes. A boy deprived of a father might develop feminine traits, or might overcompensate in attempting to prove his masculinity by rebellious, delinquent behaviour, or by obsession with masculine sport activities.

Westman points out that the outward appearance of intellectual maturity of many latency children should not be construed to mean that they are ready to handle divorce and its consequences in an adult manner. He points out that the hurt experienced from a sense of rejection by the departing parent is actually more intense during these years because the child is actively involved in identifying with his parents. It is during this period that a depressive reaction in the child often presents as disinterest in school, or withdrawn behaviour. In contrast with early childhood, when significant reactions may go unnoticed because the child shows no external evidence of them, during later childhood children tend to be outspoken, often expressing exaggerated bitterness. Reactions at this stage may include hostility, irritability,

insomnia, inability to concentrate, fall-off in schoolwork, stealing, antisocial behaviour, and a deterioration in relationships with peers.

Adolescence: During the teenage years, divorce, according to Westman, has the least effect on personality development, which in essence has already taken place. This does not imply, however, that the adolescent does not experience considerable emotion in regard to his parents' divorce. The impact of divorce on the teenager may be reflected through depression or grief, or by anger.

Sugar (1970) on the other hand, feels that the adolescent has as much or even greater need of the support of two parents as has the younger child, particularly in moving from parental to peer relationships. Palmer's (1976) study (3.4.3) also points to adolescence as a particularly vulnerable period.

Kalter (1977) examined 387 intake records of children referred for psychiatric evaluation. Children of divorce constituted one third of the referrals. These children were found to present with more antisocial and delinquent problems. They were also more likely to display overt aggression toward their parents. Kalter found no difference between children of divorce living in one-parent households and those in step-parent households. He regards the age of the child at the time of the divorce as a potentially critical factor in both the nature of the child's reactions to the divorce as well as his capacity to cope with them. He also discusses the importance of taking into account the degree of psychological disturbance in the parents, in understanding a child's reaction to divorce.

3.4.6 Epidemiological approach

Although Rutter has not specifically investigated divorce, his research into all aspects of parent-child relationships, including parent-child separation, is so extensive and prominent in the literature, than any discussion of divorce-related research would be incomplete without referring to it. Rutter (1971) in a careful examination of research and literature on parent-child separation, together with data based on his own intensive study of patients' families, presents certain important findings.

He is strongly convinced that it is not the separation itself, but rather the discord and disharmony in the family, that is at the root of behavioural and personality disturbances in children (see 3.3.1). Evidence he presents suggests that the longer tensions continue in the home, the more likelihood of disturbances in the children. Rutter's research also suggests that the effects of disharmony are not necessarily permanent, and that the child's psychological state can be expected to improve once the family situation improves.

Two types of family disharmony are described: (1) an active disturbance, such as hostility and quarrelling, and (2) a lack of positive feelings and emotional involvement. Both types of disharmony have been found to be associated with deviant behaviour in children.

Another aspect of family disharmony investigated by Rutter is the extent to which a good relationship between the child and one parent could compensate for the disturbance in the home. He contends that no matter how poor the marital relationship, the child is better off if he has a good relationship with at least one parent. This positive relationship can help considerably in mitigating the harmful effects of disharmony in the home. On the other hand, regardless of the parent-child relationship,

the rate of disorder in boys is found to be significantly higher if the marital relationship is bad.

Rutter's views regarding father-child and mother-child relationships have already been discussed in 2.2.4. In his studies, boys have been found to be significantly more vulnerable than girls to the ill-effects of parent-child separation and family discord.

3.4.7 Longitudinal studies

Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1975; 1976) carried out a two-year longitudinal study, the goals of which were:

1. to examine the response to the family crisis of divorce, and patterns of reorganisation of the family over a two-year period following divorce;
2. to examine the characteristics of family members that contributed to variations in family processes;
3. to examine the effects of variations in family interaction and structure on the development of children.

These investigators examined a white, middle class sample of 24 boys and 24 girls and their divorced parents, and the same number of children and parents from intact homes. Mean age at two months post-divorce was 3.92 years. All the children in the divorced group had been awarded to their mother's custody. Parents and children were observed in interaction both at home and in the laboratory.

Interviews were conducted with parents. Information was also obtained from parent ratings of child's behaviour, and a battery of personality scales on the parents. In addition, observations of the child were made in nursery schools, including teacher ratings of the child's behaviour, and measures of the child's sex role typing, cognitive performance and social development. Parents and children were examined at two months, one year, and two years following the divorce.

Some of the findings of this study are of considerable interest. Hetherington et al. found that the main areas in which change and stress were experienced by divorcees were:

1. practical problems of living: economic and occupational problems, and problems in running a household;
2. problems associated with changes in self concept and identity;
3. problems in maintaining a social life and in interactions with ex-spouse and child.

They report an interesting finding in relation to parent-child interaction: by two years after the divorce almost 25% of fathers and 50% of mothers stated that their relationship with their children had improved from what it had been during the marriage when parental conflict and tension had had detrimental effects (see 3.3.1; 3.3.2).

They found that divorced parents make fewer demands on their children for independence and mature behaviour, at least for the first two years after the divorce. Another finding was that divorced parents communicate less well with their children, are less affectionate, and less likely, especially in the case of boys, to ask the child's opinion and to use reasoning and explanations than are parents in intact families. Furthermore, divorced parents appear to be less consistent than parents

in intact families, and the authors related this to the lack of control they have over their children. The divorced (non-custodial) father wants his contact with the child to be as happy as possible, and he thus commences the post-divorce relationship by being extremely permissive and indulgent; this however changes with the passage of time.

Hetherington et al. found that by two years after the divorce, the parenting practices of the divorced mothers had improved. At the two-year follow-up, mothers were demanding more autonomous behaviour of their children, were communicating better, using more reasoning and giving more explanations, were more nurturant and better able to discipline their children.

When there was support and agreement between divorced couples with regard to child-rearing, disruption in family functioning appeared to be less extreme, and re-establishment of satisfactory family functioning occurred earlier. When there was agreement in child-rearing, a positive attitude toward the spouse, low conflict between the divorced parents, and when the father was emotionally mature, frequency of father-child contact was associated with more positive mother-child interactions. Conversely, when there was disagreement in attitudes toward the child, and conflict between parents, or when the father was poorly adjusted, frequent access was associated with poor mother-child functioning and disruptions in the child's behaviour. Emotional maturity in the mother was also found to be related to her adequacy in coping with stress in her new single life and her relationship with the children.

In general, Hetherington et al. found "poor parenting" to be most apparent when divorced mothers interact with their sons. They found that divorced parents communicate less, are less consistent and use more negative sanctions with their sons than with their daughters. Boys are less

compliant than girls; fathers appear to be more effective than mothers in obtaining compliance from children.

Referring to the behaviour of the children themselves, the authors found that children of divorced parents exhibit more negative behaviour than do children in intact families; furthermore, these negative behaviours are more marked in boys. In both boys and girls there is a decrease in negative behaviour after two years.

The above study has yielded some extremely interesting findings. The finding concerning the differential responses of boys and girls to the divorce experience is in line with what Rutter (1971) has found.

The "Children of Divorce Project" was started in 1970 in the US by Wallerstein and Kelly (1974; 1975; 1976), who studied 131 children (ranging in age from 2½ years to 18 years) from 60 families. Custody distribution is not given, but it is implicit that the great majority of children were with their mothers. The sample was obtained by offering a free counselling service to people filing for divorce in the Californian district of Marin County.* Cases were also referred by family lawyers, school psychologists, and pediatricians. Children with a history of psychological illness were excluded. The project thus represents the first in-depth large-scale study

* Marin County is an area of considerable affluence, with a population than can be described as "racially nearly homogeneous" (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974). It was the authors' contention that such a milieu would afford a better opportunity of systematic study of the phenomenon of divorce without interference of factors such as high crime and poverty rates.

of children of divorced parents drawn from a normal (i.e. non-clinical) population. It is a purely clinical study, with no attempt to quantify findings.

All family members were seen individually for the first time immediately after the divorce, for an evaluation period of four to six hours, extending over six weeks. They were interviewed again one year later, and again four years later. In the initial evaluation period, counselling was extended to parents in regard to how to interpret the family dissolution to the children, planning of post-divorce arrangements, and attempting to help the children cope with the effects of the divorce. Wallerstein and Kelly examined in depth the coping mechanisms of children in response to the separation and post-divorce family structure. From their observations has emerged a wealth of information relating to the responses of children of various ages to the divorce situation. Their findings in relation to the pre-school, latency and adolescent periods, will be discussed; those relating to the oedipal period are not as yet available.

Pre-school children

This group of 34 was made up of youngest (2-6 to 3-3 years), middle (3-9 to 4-10) and oldest (5-0 to 5-11) pre-school children. Different reactions were found in these three groups.

Seen immediately after the divorce, the youngest children all manifested behavioural changes, such as regression in toilet training, whining, irritability, separation anxiety and sleeping problems. By follow-up one year later, however, these symptoms had largely subsided. Three of the nine children in this youngest group who were assessed as more troubled on follow-up than on initial assessment, were found to be living in families in which the intensity of the divorce discord had remained undiminished (cf. Westman et al., 1970).

The middle group corresponds in age to the group studied by McDermott (1968) (see 3.4.4). In this group of 11 children, although many initially became whiny and irritable, they did not show the same pattern of regression of the younger group. These children revealed, by their play and fantasies, that they saw themselves as responsible for their father's departure. Seven children in this group had deteriorated by follow-up one year later. Again this was related to turmoil in the family.

The oldest group consisted of 14 children, all of whom experienced heightened anxiety and aggression at the time of the separation, manifested restlessness, moodiness, temper tantrums, whining and separation problems. In spite of the fact that these children had been exposed to considerable turmoil in the family, in addition to the divorce itself, Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) consider it very significant that they were in no way impeded in their developmental process, their liveliness or self-confidence. The authors refer to a "developmental surge" following the divorce, which reflects divorce as a stimulus to growth and maturity. Also in contrast to the two younger groups, the clinical picture at the outset and at follow-up was far more consistent in this group, suggesting that the initial clinical findings have greater predictive value at this stage, and could therefore provide a more reliable basis for early intervention.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) found that by one year follow-up, twice as many mothers and fathers had significantly altered in their interaction with their pre-school child as had remained the same (cf. Hetherington et al., 1976). This change appeared to work in both directions: many of the anxious, conflicted, disinterested or actively rejecting parents had become freer, happier and closer to their children by follow-up; on the other hand many of the parents who had been close and affectionate in their pre-divorce relationship with their children had changed by follow-up to a more estranged and neglectful parental role. The authors conclude from these findings that divorce

changes not only the marital relationship, but the parent-child relationship as well. They found that 44% of the fathers in this group had developed a closer relationship with their children than they had enjoyed prior to the divorce, and explained this in terms of the limitations of the access arrangements which seemed to provide some men with emotional safeguards enabling them to show love and concern more freely. For others, the disentanglement of their relationship with the children from the marital problems, facilitated the expression of more affection. In contrast to the improvement in the father-child relationship, the mother-child relationship was found to deteriorate with time. Wallerstein and Kelly's (1975) data emphasizes the sensitive and vulnerable nature of the relationship between the single parent and the pre-school child.

Latency children

The authors found that the 7 and 8 year old children in this group were more vulnerable than the 9 and 10 year olds who appeared more able to cope with the consequences of family disruption. They therefore evaluated the reactions of this group according to whether the children were in early or later latency.

Early latency

This group consisted of 26 children aged 7 and 8 years. Their most significant response to the separation was acute sadness, the intensity of which was in certain cases in direct proportion to the amount of turmoil generated by the divorce. Some children, however, suffered acutely even in the absence of overt parental friction. In many instances the parents were too pre-occupied with their own problems to be "available" to help their children. Most children in this group were frightened by what was

happening to the family, and many felt extremely threatened by the divorce. None of them reported relief as a result of the divorce; on the contrary, all but one expressed a strong need for the parents to reconcile. The authors did not find in these children feelings of self-blame for the divorce.

With regard to access, Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) found that alternate weekends was definitely not meeting the needs of the boys in this group; in fact, nearly all "early latency" children expressed the wish for more frequent contact with their father. As well as the infrequency of contact, many visits were ruined by continuing hostility between parents. The only children who were reasonably satisfied were those where both parents approved of free access, and where the child could thus visit the father at will.

Some of the children in this group expressed a need for the discipline and control normally supplied by father. The authors consider this dependence on the father for providing these controls as well as other protective functions, of central importance to children in early latency.

Many of the children were torn by loyalty conflicts in relation to their parents. Whereas for the most part they were reluctant to express anger toward father, considerable anger was directed toward mother for her role in the divorce. Also common were fears of antagonising the mother.

At one year follow-up, Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) found that the children's responses to the divorce had altered: the intensity of the pain had subsided into sad resignation. Where turmoil between parents continued, the children felt increasingly angry. Loyalty conflicts in relation to parents had decreased. The boys in particular were still

anxious for more access to father. Although 50% of the children in this group manifested improvement in psychological functioning, 23% were considered to have deteriorated. The authors relate these findings to the nature of the post-divorce family structure, including the amount of turmoil. They conclude that it is not the event of the divorce which is the central factor in determining the outcome for the child, but rather the divorce process, which can last for several years (cf. Westman et al., 3.4.5).

Later latency

This group consisted of 31 children aged 9 and 10 years. In contrast to the "early latency" children who were frequently immobilized by grief, the "later latency" group appeared to be actively trying to combat their fears and emotions. The most outstanding single emotion characterising this group was the intensity of their anger, together with the capacity to express this anger. These children, unlike the younger group, were ashamed of the divorce. Feelings of responsibility for causing the divorce were found in only a few of them. Many experienced a sense of loss of identity, which Wallerstein and Kelly (1976) relate to the fact that during the latency years, the child's concept of his own identity is closely tied to the external family structure and developmentally dependent on the physical presence of parental figures (cf. Westman, 1972). Another characteristic typical of this age group is a sense of loneliness and isolation, which the authors relate to their position of divided loyalty in regard to the parents. Psychosomatic problems were evident for the first time in this group. Half of the children suffered a fall-off in scholastic performance, as well as deterioration in peer relationships.

At one year follow-up the authors found that for 50% of

these children, the intensity of reaction to the divorce had largely subsided, while the remainder showed evidence of continuing conflict and depression, and in fact were more distressed than when first seen. This latter group presented with depression, low self-esteem, as well as scholastic and peer difficulties. Relatively few children of the "later latency" group, whether better or poorly adjusted, were able to maintain good relationships with both parents.

Adolescence

Twenty-one children in the sample were 13 years or older at the time of the divorce. While the authors recognised that the adolescent's reaction to divorce is largely influenced by the history of parent-child relationship in each individual case, they did however find some responses which they considered characteristic of the group as a whole.

All 21 adolescents experienced the divorce as extremely painful. Common emotions were anger at parents, sadness, sense of loss, embarrassment with regard to peers, and marked concern about their own future marriage. A common concern among the adolescents was worry about money insofar as this related to their future education and needs. They did not appear to feel responsible for the divorce. The adolescents tended to perceive their parents' divorce as a betrayal. The anger arising out of this gave rise to a sense of loss and loneliness. Furthermore, the parent's need for support from the child frequently resulted in feelings of despair, anger and guilt in the adolescent. Wallerstein and Kelly (1974) had anticipated a less acute reaction in the adolescent group, in accordance with their developmental stage, i.e. of psychologically distancing themselves from their parents.

By follow-up one year later almost all the adolescents had

managed to resolve their active loyalty conflicts. The authors suggested that the normal developmental process of disengaging from parent figures, together with the ability to perceive parents as separate individuals, are of invaluable assistance to adolescents in coping with divorce. All the adolescents in the study had to a certain extent made use of withdrawal as a defence against the pain of divorce. This included a greater emphasis upon social and other activities which involved staying away from home.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1974) found that within a year most of this group were able to return to normal, and were in some cases the better, in terms of greater independence and maturity, for having mastered events of the preceding year.

The above study marks a milestone in our knowledge and understanding of the effects of divorce upon children. In particular, it provides valuable insights into the differential effects of divorce upon children at various ages, and into the progression of post-divorce coping mechanisms. The reported findings underline the change in children's divorce-related reactions with the passage of time. By one year follow-up there were, in almost all cases, changes in the children, compared to how they had initially presented. Although some children had deteriorated clinically, on the whole they had tended to come to terms with their situation and, at least in some cases, divorce appeared to be a "stimulus to greater maturity".

There are one or two methodological issues to be raised, however. The sample was obtained by offering a counselling service to families in the throes of divorce. This might conceivably mean that to a certain extent at least,

a somewhat biased sample might have been attracted, in spite of the fact that children with a history of psychological illness were excluded. Furthermore, counselling was provided during the six week evaluation period, and there were also occasions when therapeutic intervention was considered necessary and carried out. It is suggested here that such intervention and even the investigation itself, might to a certain extent have had an effect upon the findings. It is therefore necessary to bear this in mind when interpreting these findings.

Wallerstein and Kelly (1974; 1975; 1976) in grouping their sample of 131 children according to age at the time of the divorce, in effect present data based on a relatively small number of children in each age group. Although the data they present yields valuable information within the framework adopted, namely "to study parental divorce as an individual psychological experience" (1974, p.481), one should be aware that there might be limits to the extent to which generalisations can be made beyond the specific "individual psychological experiences" described.

In its scope, and by virtue of the detail of its findings, the "Children of Divorce Project" is extremely significant in divorce research.

Unfortunately, the results of the 4 year follow-up were not available in time for inclusion in this dissertation.

now to be left behind" (1956), p.56). The presence of both parents might be vital to the individual at this stage. On the other hand, adolescence is also a time when the parents cease to be essential supports, and when influences and identity figures other than parents assume increasing importance in the individual's life. Seen in this light, therefore, a divorce occurring at this time need not necessarily be devastating. Perhaps this explains the divergent reports of post-divorce adolescent adjustment. Measurement of maladjustment during adolescence is understandably difficult if one considers the viewpoint of Anna Freud (1958) who states that the upholding of a steady equilibrium during adolescence is in itself abnormal. Schechter et al. (1972) also state that the very disorderliness of adolescence defines its normality. This being the case, how is one to assess the extent to which apparent disturbance is the result of the developmental stage, or to what extent it reflects situational determinants such as parental divorce?

Herzog and Sudia have pointed out that conclusions based on age of the child at separation are complicated by variations in the completeness of separation. Researchers who examine sex differences in children's response to divorce (McDermott, 1968; Rutter, 1971; Hetherington et al., 1976) have found a greater vulnerability of boys to discord within the family. The ability of children to re-adjust after the trauma of divorce is emphasized in most of the studies.

Emerging from a review of divorce-related studies is the strong suggestion that it is no longer meaningful to discuss in broad terms the effects of divorce upon children, for these effects have been found to vary markedly with certain constellations of factors, such as sex of the child, age at the time of the divorce, amount of turmoil generated by the divorce, the nature of the relationship between child and non-custodial parent, and changes in

the structure of external controls and methods of punishment in the family. As Goode (1956) and Schlesinger (1969) have suggested, a comparison of different types of divorce situations in terms of their impact upon the family would be more meaningful than comparisons between divorced and intact families.

In the studies reviewed, it appears to be the exception rather than the rule to give a custody distribution for the sample; the mother is generally assumed to be the custodial parent. An interesting comparison presents itself between the custody distributions of Goode's (1956) and Palmer's (1976) studies. Whereas in the former only 2.4% of the children were awarded to father's custody, in the latter study this percentage had increased to 17%. This could indicate a trend in the direction of increased father custody. This is corroborated by Glick's data (cited in Levine, 1976) to the effect that between 1970 and 1974 the percentage of children under 6 years of age living with a divorced father was increasing faster than the percentage of children under 6 living with a divorced mother (see also 6.2.1.1).

With regard to access, although this was discussed in some detail by Goode (1956), and although several writers (see 2.1.2) have recognised its importance in the post-divorce adjustment of children, there has been no reported systematic attempt to examine the effects of different access arrangements, until very recently (Palmer, 1976).

Derdeyn (1974) has made the point that most studies that have been carried out thus far do not offer practical assistance to courts which can be expected to assist in decision-making. He underlines the need for studying the effects of divorce in terms of court decisions regarding custody.

Information obtained from a compilation of divorce-related research in the US (Raschke and Raschke, 1976; 1977) and

from the National Council on Family Relations Task Force on Divorce and Divorce Reform (NCFR Task Force Report, 1974) reveals that there is currently an upsurge of interest and concern in that country with regard to all aspects of divorce, including the effects upon children. This interest is leading to more and more empirical research. To date, no empirical studies in relation to divorce have emanated from South Africa.

RESEARCH DESIGN

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Subjects
- 4.3 Tracing procedure for sample
- 4.4 Pilot study
- 4.5 Main study
- 4.6 Analysis and quantification of data

INTRODUCTION

As the research design of this study is complex in nature, a brief summary will be presented at the outset, in order to orientate the reader.

The method used may be described as retrospective in that the divorce had occurred from 5 to 10 years prior to the investigation.*

Custodial parents and children were interviewed with the aim of eliciting: (1) factual information regarding family constellation and post-divorce arrangements, (2) information relating to the way in which specific aspects of the divorce, for example access arrangements, were perceived by both child and custodial parent.

It was not the intention of this study to carry out an in-depth investigation into effects of divorce on the custodial parent; the primary concern was with how the child experienced the divorce.

* Divorces occurred between 1965 and 1970; field-work took place during 1975 and 1976.

An attempt was made to assess the child's level of adjustment, by means of: (1) ratings on eight variables selected as making up a measure of adjustment, and (2) clinical evaluation. In (1) projective tests were used as adjuncts to the clinical interview (see 6.1.4).

General adjustment of the child was then considered in relation to six sets of variables: divorce variables (e.g. sex of custodial parent); child variables (e.g. sex, age at divorce); parent variables (e.g. adjustment of custodial parent); parent-child interactional variables (e.g. level of parent-child communication); family constellation variables (e.g. siblings, step-parents); and socio-economic variables (e.g. change in financial status).

4.2 SUBJECTS

4.2.1 Sample

4.2.1.1 Description

The sample investigated consisted of 92 children, 45 males and 47 females, ranging in age from 9 to 28 years (median age 16),* of 51 divorced parents drawn from the records of the Supreme Court, Cape Town, South Africa. Fifty-one children (24 boys and 27 girls) had been awarded to their

* For frequency distribution of age of children at time of examination see Appendix 2.

mother's custody and 41 (21 boys and 20 girls) to their father's custody. Twenty-one children were "only" children, or the only child investigated in a particular family; the remainder were all seen along with some or all of their siblings (see Appendix 3).

Although no particular socio-economic group was selected for the investigation, the majority of families can be described as "middle class". (See Appendix 4 for social class rating).

4.2.1.2 Criteria for selection

Children who were 16 years and below at the time of the parents' divorce were included in the study.

All subjects were drawn from the white, English-speaking section of the population.

Adopted children were excluded from the sample, as this would have introduced another set of variables into an already complex research programme.

Children were excluded where there was any suspicion of intellectual deficit.

4.2.2 Control Group

4.2.2.1 Rationale

The most important reason for inclusion of the control group was to examine whether or not children of divorce are inevitably maladjusted.

4.2.2.2 Description

The control group consisted of 25 subjects, 11 males and 14 females, ranging in age from 9 to 28 years, from a similar sub-population to the sample, and matched with the sample for age, sex, educational or occupational placement, religion and, where possible, ordinal position in family. The primary criterion in selecting control subjects was that they all came from intact families, that is, a family in which both natural parents were present for the duration of childhood.

4.2.2.3 Method of selection

The control group was obtained by matching every third sample subject on variables listed in 4.2.2.2.

4.3 TRACING PROCEDURE FOR SAMPLE

4.3.1 Source

The sample was drawn from the records of the Supreme Court, Cape Town, of divorces occurring between 1965 and 1970.

4.3.2 Method of selection

Permission was obtained from the Registrar of the Supreme Court, Cape Town, for the writer to peruse records of all cases appearing before the court between 1965 and 1970. As the court has no separate filing system for particular

types of cases, it was necessary to peruse all files and to select those relating to divorce, which met the criteria described in 4.2.1.2. It should be noted that the sample was drawn from divorce cases in general and was not specifically made up of contested custody cases.

A total of no fewer than 17 038 files was perused, of which 1 060 met the above criteria. The following information, where available was noted from these files:

- (i) full names of both spouses;
- (ii) parent to whom custody was granted;*
- (iii) age and sex of children, where available;
- (iv) address of custodial parent.

Sorting through files in the Supreme Court Archives continued from the beginning of 1974 until mid 1975 on the basis of approximately 10 hours per week.

4.3.3 Tracing methodology

Having noted the names of cases meeting the criteria for selection, the next step was to locate their present whereabouts. The Cape Peninsula telephone directory was used. Names and addresses in the directory were found to correspond exactly with information obtained from the court records in only 69 instances. In order to trace the great majority of divorcees a system of quasi-detective work was employed (see 6.1.1.1).

All names corresponding to those listed in the telephone directory were transcribed into a notebook. This list included the 69 abovementioned, as well as those cases

* As indicated in 1.7 (ii), this was not necessarily always the custodial parent as defined in this study.

where names and initials tallied, but where the address had altered. By a process of elimination through abundant use of the telephone, an attempt was made to trace these people. A meticulous process of checking and cross-checking was embarked upon. Using this method, it took approximately one year to trace 246 of the original 1 060 names (see 6.1.1.2). The new address, telephone number, and new name (in the case of remarried mothers) were noted. A letter* (see Appendix 5) explaining the nature of the investigation was sent to each parent. After approximately one week had elapsed, the writer telephoned each recipient in order to ascertain whether or not they would be willing to participate in the study. Arrangements were made to interview those who agreed to participate. In each case of refusal to participate, an attempt was made to elicit reasons for this refusal (see Appendix 6).

After 246 cases had been located, the tracing procedure was suspended. Furthermore, not all traced cases were contacted once it was considered that a sufficient number had been obtained for purposes of this study (see 6.1.3.1 (iii)).

4.3.4 Parental co-operation

Letters were sent to 134 parents; 70 agreed to participate in the study,** and 64 refused to participate.

* A considerable effort was made to convey the impression that this was not a form letter: i.e. facsimile type-writer font was used by the printer, each letter was signed individually, dated with the current date, and the name and address of the person was typed with a matching typewriter so that the whole appeared as a personal letter.

** The total number of parents seen (main investigation and pilot group) was in fact 65, five falling away for miscellaneous reasons.

Pilot group

Letters sent : 24 (16 mothers, 8 fathers)
Acceptances : 14 (9 mothers, 5 fathers)

Sample

Letters sent : 110 (75 mothers, 35 fathers)
Acceptances : 56 (33 mothers, 23 fathers)

Number of families in sample : 51 (29 mothers,
22 fathers)

(For analysis of reasons for agreeing to, and refusal to participate in the study see Appendix 6).

4.4 PILOT STUDY

This was carried out in two stages, pilot group A and pilot group B (see Appendix 7). The present outline considers both stages globally.

4.4.1 Subjects

Nine* parents (6 mothers and 3 fathers) and 13 children ranging in age from 9 to 22 years were seen.

4.4.2 Techniques used

Parents and children were interviewed. The Incomplete Sentences Blank (Rotter & Rafferty, 1950; Rotter, 1951) was administered to the children.

* The remaining five of the 14 acceptances formed part of the main study.

4.4.3 Aims

- (i) To examine the feasibility of expecting people to co-operate in the research programme.
- (ii) To systematize procedure, in particular to assist in the refinement of interview and projective test techniques.

4.4.4 Experience gained from pilot study

- (i) Response to letters soliciting co-operation confirmed that it would be feasible to expect people to co-operate in the study (see 4.3.4).
- (ii) Modifications to the original format of interviews with both parents and children were introduced as a result of the pilot study.
- (iii) Number of sentence stems in the Incomplete Sentences Blank was reduced from 40 to 20, for reasons of economy of time, as well as consideration of the child's level of motivation. Analysis of responses of "pilot children" assisted in selecting those stems most suitable to retain.

4.5 MAIN STUDY

Custodial parents and children were seen separately.

The investigation was conducted in the following sequence:

- (i) interview with custodial parent;
- (ii) examination of child's present adjustment level and reactions to the divorce.

4.5.1 Interview with custodial parent

4.5.1.1 Introduction

Most interviews took place in the home of the custodial parent. In a few instances, for reasons of convenience of the interviewee, interviews took place in the writer's consulting rooms, or at the place of work of the interviewee. As the great majority of parents were employed during the day, most interviews took place in the evening or during weekends. Home visits extended throughout all the white residential suburbs of the Cape Peninsula.

Average time taken was 45 minutes. This interview was the first procedure carried out; parents were not seen following the examination of the child.

4.5.1.2 Aims:

- (i) To elicit factual information regarding family constellation and the post-divorce arrangements.
- (ii) To ascertain the parent's perception of the child's adjustment, of problems experienced by both parent and child as a result of the divorce, and of aspects of parent-child interaction.

- (iii) To rate the parent's adjustment level.

4.5.1.3 Parents seen

- (i) Mothers: 29 custodial mothers were interviewed. In 14 instances there was only one child in the family, or only one child available for the investigation. In 15 instances the interview concerned more than one child.
- (ii) Fathers: 22 custodial fathers were interviewed. In six instances only one child in the family was available for the interview. In 16 instances the interview concerned more than one child (see Appendix 3).

4.5.1.4 Outline of interview

(See Appendix 8; see also 4.6.3). It has been noted (see 4.1) that this was not intended as an in-depth probing into the effects of divorce on the custodial parent. Areas explored were, therefore, concerned primarily with the behaviour and experiences of the parents insofar as these would be expected to have an effect upon the child. The questions themselves aimed at obtaining a factual account from the custodial parent. In addition to this however, a considerable amount of information about the parents themselves became apparent during the course of the interview.

The interview commenced by eliciting an outline of present family constellation, information regarding remarriage of both spouses, and present whereabouts of the ex-spouse. A detailed outline was obtained of the nature, both amount and quality, of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent. The court decree or arrangement

in the Consent Paper regarding access was also established. Relevant details were obtained regarding the age of the child at the time of the marital break-up, the way in which the divorce was explained to the child, an outline of the child's scholastic career, his relationship with family members and peers, as well as his general behavioural and personality characteristics. The parent's assessment of any difficulties that the child had experienced, or was experiencing, as a result either of the divorce itself or of access arrangements, were noted.

Parents were also asked if it had been necessary to consult a psychologist in connection with the child's behaviour, or for advice regarding handling the child. A statement was requested as to problems experienced as a single parent. Each parent was asked whether they would have taken advantage of a counselling service, had there been one available at the time of the divorce.

Parents were asked on what basis custody had been awarded to them.

They were asked briefly about their own life-style, work-adjustment and social relationships.

Each parent was asked in what way they had communicated the nature of the present investigation to their children.

Finally, comments and questions were invited about the present research or the general subject of divorce.

Upon completion of the parental interview, the parent's adjustment level was rated (see Appendix 9).

4.5.2 Interview and psychological assessment of child

4.5.2.1 Introduction

The purpose was to assess the child's adjustment level and reactions to the divorce. The examination was carried out in one session, lasting between 1 hour and 2½ hours depending on the age of the child. (Usually, the younger the child, the less time taken). Most interviews took place in the child's home. There were a few exceptions to this, when for reasons of convenience or privacy, the interviewee (or parent) requested that the interview should take place away from home, and these people were consequently seen in the writer's consulting rooms.

The first set of data was made up of:

- (i) An interview aimed at eliciting information regarding the child's general functioning and level of adjustment (see Appendix 10).
- (ii) Psychological tests:
 - (a) Incomplete Sentences Blank.
 - (b) TAT.
 - (c) Human Figure Drawing (in 36 cases only).

The second set of data was obtained from an interview aimed at eliciting information concerning the child's experiences and feelings about the divorce and access arrangements (see Appendix 11).

Each child was asked to express his feelings in the following areas:

1. Which type of access would the child have preferred?
2. Should parents stay together for the sake of the children?

3. To what extent did the child consider himself negatively affected as a result of the divorce?
4. Was the divorce satisfactorily explained to the child?
5. Did the divorce experience affect the child's desire to marry?
6. Did the presence of siblings help the child in adjusting to the divorce?
7. Which parental behaviours were experienced as most distressing?

The child's level of adjustment was assessed clinically during the examination (see Appendix 12).

4.5.2.2 Interview I

(See Appendix 10). Interview I was the first contact between writer and child. An attempt was made at the outset to put the child at ease and to establish rapport. The child was told that this part of the session would not be concerned with a discussion of divorce.

Information was obtained regarding the child's present occupational or educational placement, and the events leading up to this. He was asked about his relationships within the family as well as with friends. Views on marriage (in relation to himself) were elicited. Wishes for the future, ambitions, hopes and interests were discussed.

This interview thus provided valuable information regarding the child's relationships, way of life, and general level of adjustment.*

* Some of the questions in Interview I were adapted from Kagan & Moss (1962).

4.5.2.3 Interview II

(See Appendix 11.) This interview took place on completion of the projective tests. Before commencing the interview, each child was given a broad outline of the main reasons for the research. The chief aim was stated as hoping to help prevent conflicts in children of divorcing parents in the future. Each interviewee was told that no further contact would take place between the writer and the custodial parent, and that non-custodial parents would not be seen at all. The confidential nature of treatment of material was stressed.

The interview was specifically designed to elicit the child's feelings regarding the divorce, access arrangements, ways in which he considered he had suffered as a result of the divorce, and the manner in which his parents had explained the divorce. Feelings vis-à-vis parents, siblings, step-parents and step- and half-siblings in both custodial and non-custodial homes were elicited. Children were also asked to state an opinion as to the desirability of parents living together or apart when there was serious marital discord, and to state to what extent specific parental behaviours had been disturbing to them.

Each child was asked what advice he would offer to parents contemplating divorce, and to children of divorcing parents.

4.5.2.4 Projective tests

(i) Incomplete Sentences Blank (ISB)

(a) Rationale for selection: The writer's previous experience in the use of projective tests in clinical practice was a factor here. The ISB was considered capable of yielding valuable information about the way in which a person looked at and coped with life, as well as about his general feeling level. An advantage of this test is its simplicity of administration and scoring.

(b) Description: A modified version of Rotter's Incomplete Sentences Blank (Rotter & Rafferty, 1950) was employed (see Appendix 13). Subjects were requested to complete 20 sentence stems in writing. The test is not timed: time taken to complete the stems ranged from 15 to 30 minutes.

(c) Scoring: The scoring system employed differed from that of Rotter & Rafferty (1950), which is aimed at providing information of a general nature about S's personality. In the present study, sentences were analysed and scored according to information yielded about each of the eight variables (see 4.6.2.1) selected as a measure of adjustment. Sentences were not scored individually, but rather, completed sentences were examined in a global way from the point of view of information revealed about each variable. Each variable was rated on a 5-point rating scale (see Appendix 14).

(ii) Thematic Apperception Test (TAT)

(a) Rationale for selection: The decision to include the TAT in the examination was made after completion of the pilot study. It was anticipated that this test might provide worthwhile information in the assessment of the child's adjustment. It was hoped that the TAT Conflict score (see (e) below) would point to the degree of disturbance in the child.

(b) Description: The Thematic Apperception Test (Murray, 1943) consists of a set of pictures presented individually to S who is asked to make up a story about what he sees.

(c) Selection of cards:

The following eight cards were selected: 1, 2, 3BM, 4, 6BM, 7GF, 8BM and 10 (see Appendix 15).

Cards were selected on the basis of their likelihood of eliciting themes of rejection, abandonment, conflicts, and family relationships, as well as of providing information regarding the eight variables selected as making up "adjustment" of the child (see 4.6.2.1). It was considered that the above eight cards provided ample scope for projection by all the children, irrespective of age or sex.

(d) Administration and scoring: The conventional method of TAT administration was employed (Murray, 1943). Stories were told orally; these were taken down verbatim by the examiner. Time taken for completion ranged from 20 to 30 minutes.

The test was not scored according to conventional methods. A rating from 1 to 5 was obtained from a global assessment of all stories for each of the eight variables.*

(e) "TAT Conflict score": This was aimed at providing information regarding the way in which the child coped with conflicts and anxieties in the stories. The TAT Conflict score was rated on a 4-point scale, from a global assessment of all eight stories. Use of ego-defence mechanisms was considered in this rating. Scoring ranged from (1) which indicated that the child was able to resolve conflicts and cope satisfactorily with anxiety, to situations where he was totally unable to cope with conflicts (4) (see Appendix 16).

* This rating was, however, not included in the final computation of the child's adjustment (see 6.1.4.4 (i)).

(iii) Human Figure Drawing (HFD)

(a) Rationale for including: This technique was included and administered to the first 36 subjects (see 6.1.4.5) on the basis of its use as a projective test.

(b) Administration: Children were asked to draw a person; on completion they were requested to draw a person of the opposite sex. A "whole" person was requested, not merely the head.

(c) Scoring: No formal scoring system was used. An assessment of the projective features was made. Those drawings considered to add something to the clinical picture of the child were put aside for discussion.

4.6 ANALYSIS AND QUANTIFICATION OF DATA

Data was analysed in terms of the following sets of variables:

1. Divorce variables;
2. Child variables;
3. Parent variables;
4. Parent-child interactional variables;
5. Family constellation variables;
6. Socio-economic variables.

4.6.1 Divorce variables

4.6.1.1 Custodial pattern

This indicates whether mother or father was the custodial parent, and constitutes the most important subdivision of children in this study.

A code value* of 0 for custodial father and 1 for custodial mother was given to each child.

4.6.1.2 Access pattern

(i) Access frequency

This refers to the actual degree of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent. Four degrees of access emerged:

(a) Frequent access

Refers to frequent and unrestricted contact between child and non-custodial parent. By implication, both parents have to co-operate in order for this to be possible: the custodial parent by encouraging, or at least not discouraging, the continuing close relationship between child and ex-spouse, and the non-custodial parent by reciprocating and actively encouraging the child's need for a continuing close relationship.

* Code values served the purpose of differentiating between situations for purposes of statistical analysis and are not intended to convey any suggestion of value in rating.

(b) Regulated access:

This type of access arrangement is either agreed upon between parents, or may be ordered by the court. It applies to situations where the child sees the non-custodial parent on a regular basis, such as weekends or alternate weekends. It is the type of arrangement most commonly expected in cases where "reasonable access" (see (iii) below) has been decreed by the court. In terms of a continuum this would be rated as "moderately frequent".

(c) Occasional access:

Refers to situations where there is no set pattern for access, but where the child and non-custodial parent see each other only sporadically, either because one or the other or both are reluctant to maintain closer contact, or resulting out of the attitude of the custodial parent toward access, or because either custodial or non-custodial parent has moved to another town.

(d) No access:

This is self evident and indicates that all contact between the non-custodial parent and the family has ceased. Usually, but not necessarily always, these are the cases where the non-custodial parent abandoned the family. Included here are those cases where, arising out of his/her extremely unsuitable behaviour, the non-custodial parent has been barred by the court from further contact with the children. Some of the factors responsible for "occasional access" might in more extreme form lead to cessation of all contact between the child and the non-custodial parent.

Frequent, regular, occasional and no access were rated 3, 2, 1 and 0 respectively.

(ii) Free access:

Whilst in effect very similar to frequent access (see (a) above), free access is rated according to the child's perception of the situation, rather than the actual amount of time spent with the non-custodial parent. For example, a child may perceive the access arrangements as free in that he has the choice of seeing the non-custodial parent as often as he likes; he may choose, however, to see the non-custodial parent only occasionally, or on a regular basis. It is thus feasible that he could be rated free access and at the same time occasional or regular access.

Where the child perceived that he had the freedom to see as much as he liked of the non-custodial parent, a code value of 1 was given.

(iii) Reasonable access;

In contrast to the above first four access patterns, which refer to the actual amount of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent (i.e. "degree" of access), "reasonable access" refers to the decree commonly found in divorce consent papers, as ordered by the court (see 2.2).

The actual interpretation of and implementation of "reasonable access" is usually left to the discretion of the parties involved. In general, however, the practice of "reasonable access" corresponds most nearly to what is described in (i b) above, that is, a regular weekly or monthly pre-arranged

"plan" of contact between child and non-custodial parent.

Where there had been a court order of "reasonable access" a code value of 1 was given.

4.6.1.3 Interparental turbulence

This refers (Westman et al., 1970) to interparental conflict and hostility. Turbulence may have been a long-standing characteristic of the parental relationship, or may have been generated by the divorce itself; in either event it continues into the post-divorce period. This variable was selected on the basis that it was a likely factor in the disturbance of children of divorce, as distinct from the divorce experience per se. Interparental turbulence was clinically assessed from data obtained during the parent interview on the basis of a 5-point scale from 0 to 4, ranging from a "friendly" relationship between parents, to situations of extreme conflict, characterised by open hostility and total inability to communicate (see Appendix 17).

4.6.2 Child variables

4.6.2.1 Adjustment level (statistically determined)

(i) Selection of variables

The investigator's clinical experience, together with perusal and evaluation of the literature (e.g. Erikson, 1950; 1960; Rogers, 1967; Neubauer, 1972) led to the selection of the following eight variables as making up the child's "adjustment level".

- (a) Warmth vs. conflict in relationship to family members.
- (b) High vs. low ability to function independently.
- (c) High vs. low ability to have meaningful social relationships.
- (d) High vs. low level of aspiration.
- (e) High vs. low self concept.
- (f) Optimism vs. pessimism.
- (g) Coping vs. non-coping in occupational role.
- (h) Mature vs. immature sex-role functioning.

Each variable was rated on a 5-point scale from 1 to 5 on each of the measuring instruments: interview, Incomplete Sentences, and TAT (see Appendix 14 for details of scoring criteria).

(a) Warmth vs. conflict in relationship to family members

This variable provides information about the child's relationship to his family and his level of adjustment within the family. Scoring ranges from the person who is completely well-adjusted within the family, with close family bonds, the family being perceived as totally nurturant, through situations where the child experiences an increasing degree of stress and conflict in family relationships, until conflicts between himself and his family are so severe as to actively interfere with and disturb his life.

(b) High vs. low ability to function independently

This variable provides information about the person's ability to function independently. The range of ratings here is from the child who is confident in his ability to make his own decisions and who copes

well with the vicissitudes of life without undue reliance upon outside assistance, through cases where he manifests a need for support from others in certain areas, becoming dependent to an increasing degree. The other end of the continuum for this variable would be an extremely dependent person who finds it virtually impossible to cope with life without excessive reliance upon others.

(c) High vs. low ability to have meaningful social relationships

This measures the quality of the person's relationship with people in his environment. It includes peer-relationships in the younger child, and goes on to include the wider field of social relationships in the adolescent and adult. Scoring ranges from a mutually rewarding "giving" relationship with another person in which is manifested a definite ability to relate on a deep, meaningful emotional level, through social relationships which are more confined to the sharing of activities and interests, such as membership in a group, or outings, or sporting activities, to situations where other people become increasingly less important, where the person actively experiences conflicts in his social relationships, and finally, in the most extreme cases, where he is virtually isolated from social contacts.

(d) High vs. low level of aspiration

Provides information regarding the person's need to achieve. This variable measures the person's drive toward self-actualisation and ranges from evidence of strong Achievement with active involvement in planning to achieve, to denial of thought regarding achievement.

(e) High vs. low self-concept

This is a measure of the individual's self-appraisal. Ratings range from confident and positive self-appraisal without any expressed areas of conflict or self-doubt, through instances where the person experiences an increasing degree of self-doubt and dissatisfaction, to strong feelings of generalised inadequacy.

(f) Optimism vs. pessimism

This variable measures the extent to which the individual is forward-looking, with hope for the future (in terms of happiness, as opposed to achievement). Scoring ranges from the person with a positive, confident outlook, to the person who is extremely pessimistic, depressed, with a sense of hopelessness. In effect this variable provides a measure of the child's level of depression.

(g) Coping vs. non-coping in occupational role

This variable provides information about level of adjustment in the occupational, college or school situation. Scoring ranges from the person who is deeply and happily involved in his work to one who is actively unhappy in his occupational or educational placement.

(h) Mature vs. immature sex-role functioning

(This variable is scored only for children of 16 and above). A measure of the person's ability to take on the role appropriate to his sex. Best adjustment here would be successful heterosexual relationships, marriage and the desire to have a family. Scoring continues through situations where the individual experiences increasing conflicts in relation to the opposite sex, and uncertainty as to his role, expressed denial or fear in relation to marriage, with

the most maladjusted person being one who has no heterosexual relationships at all, and has perhaps dedicated himself to a life of religious or purely intellectual pursuit in a definite attempt to deny his sexuality.

(ii) Computation of adjustment score

Principal component theory (Anderson, 1958) was adopted in order to obtain an "adjustment" score, instead of using the mean of the scores on the various scales as an overall adjustment score. The latter method has the disadvantage of giving equal weight to each variable; this results in highly correlated variables (i.e. those measuring essentially the same thing) being given too large a weight in the final score.

The principal components are a series of linear combinations of the variables that have the largest variance of all possible linear combinations, and are independent of each other. When a large number of variables is measured on each individual, consideration of only the first few principal components makes it possible to reduce these very considerably. These new principal component variables "explain" most of the variability between individuals.

The first principal component, which is in fact the linear combination with the largest variance, is in many situations a measure of the overall "size" of the individual. This is precisely the measure sought for the overall adjustment score. This approach has also been used by Birren and Morrison (1961) (cited by Morrison, 1976).

Thus the adjustment score used in this study is the

linear combination with maximum variance of the 16 variables measured by the interview and ISB.

4.6.2.2 Adjustment level (clinically determined)

The child's level of adjustment was rated on a 5-point scale from 1 to 5 immediately on completion of the examination. This was a clinical assessment based on the investigator's clinical experience. Scoring ranged from children judged to be well-adjusted without any apparent emotional problems (1) to individuals considered to be psychologically disturbed (5) (see Appendix 12).

4.6.2.3 Sex of child

A code value of 0 or 1 was given to males and females respectively.

4.6.2.4 Age at divorce

This refers to the age of the child at the time of the divorce. Children were grouped into four age categories: under 3 years, 3-0 to 6-11, 7-0 to 12-11, and above 13 years.

4.6.2.5 Reactions to aspects of the divorce experience

(i) Access

(a) Perception of problems arising out of access:

This provided information about the child's perception of how successful the access pattern operative in his particular case was, and to what extent he had experienced problems as a result of these access arrangements. This was rated on a 5-point scale

from 0 to 4. Scoring ranged from situations where the child perceived the access arrangements as working very well without problems (0) to the other end of the continuum where acute distress was associated with access (4) (see Appendix 18).

(b) Expressed preference for degree of contact with non-custodial parent

Children were asked to state, given the choice, what degree of contact (or type of access pattern) with the non-custodial parent they would have preferred.

(ii) Assessment of divorce-related problems

Provides information regarding the extent to which the child perceived himself as having, or having had problems as a result of the divorce. Two ratings (each on a 5-point scale from 0 to 4) were obtained for this item, one relating to the degree of the child's problems around the time of the divorce, while the other reflected the child's perception of problems still pertaining at the time of the examination. In this way it was hoped to obtain information regarding increase or decrease in problems with the passage of time. Scores ranged from children who considered that they had suffered no ill-effects whatsoever as a result of the divorce (0) to those who regarded themselves as considerably damaged as a result thereof (4) (see Appendix 19).

(iii) Specific problems experienced as a result of the divorce

Differs from (ii) above in that in this instance children were asked to actually describe the main difficulties experienced as a result of the divorce. From their responses, a list was compiled of specific divorce-related problems.

- (iv) Was the divorce satisfactorily explained to child?

Children were asked to state whether their parent/s had given a satisfactory and honest account of the reasons for the divorce.

- (v) Child's attitude toward unhappily married parents staying together for the sake of the children

Children were asked whether, given the choice, they would rather have had their parents remain together in spite of their marital difficulties, or would rather have had them divorce.

- (vi) Attitude to own marriage

- (a) Expressed desire to marry:

Refers to the child's desire to marry or remain single, and the extent to which the divorce experience consciously affected this desire.

- (b) Actual marital history of sample:

This item was applicable only in some cases, owing to the age distribution of the sample. The aim was to try and ascertain the extent to which the child's own marriage relationship was successful.

- (vii) Attitude regarding family constellation

- (a) Siblings:

The main question here was the extent to which the presence of siblings was judged to be an important factor in the child's ability to cope with and accept the divorce. The aim was to try and ascertain the extent to which children of divorce derive support from siblings.

(b) Step-parents:

Child's attitude to step-parents, in custodial as well as non-custodial family, was elicited.

(c) Step- and half-siblings:

Child's attitude to step- and half-siblings in custodial as well as non-custodial family, was elicited.

(viii) Parental behaviours experienced as most distressing

Child was asked to describe which parental behaviours were experienced as particularly upsetting. Behaviours of both custodial and non-custodial parents were included here.

(ix) Expressed preference for custodial parent

Child was asked to say which parent he would have chosen as custodian had he had the choice. The rationale was to examine to what extent decisions made for children in their "best interests" in fact corresponded with what the children themselves wanted.

4.6.3 Parent variables (custodial parent)4.6.3.1 Adjustment level

This was assessed on the basis of the parent interview. The following six areas were considered:

- (i) Relationship to ex-spouse;
- (ii) Relationship to child;
- (iii) Coping with new way of life;

- (iv) Occupational satisfaction;
- (v) Presenting image, self concept;
- (vi) Communication with child.

Each of these areas was rated on a 3-point scale from 0 to 2, and the total score converted to a 5-point rating scale. (See Appendix 9 for scoring criteria).

The way in which the parent discussed these areas, the content of what was said, as well as the writer's clinical judgment, were considered in rating.

(i) Relationship to ex-spouse

Scoring ranged from those parents who had achieved a "working" relationship with the ex-spouse, or at least a measure of co-operation regarding the children, to situations of extreme hostility toward the ex-spouse so that no communication was possible.

(ii) Relationship to child

This provides information regarding the level of warmth in the parent-child relationship (see Parent-child bond (4.6.4.1)). Scoring ranges from a close parent-child bond with intrinsic valuation of the child to situations of increasing conflict and/or rejection.

(iii) Coping with new way of life

Provides information about parent's adjustment to his/her new status, either as a single parent, or remarried, which might include adjustment to step-children. (Specific adjustment to occupational situation is considered separately in (iv) below). Scoring ranges from the person who appears to be

content with the status quo, to parents who present as dissatisfied and are in extreme cases unable to cope with their changed circumstances.

(iv) Occupational satisfaction

This deals specifically with the parent's occupational adjustment. It includes actual job satisfaction as well as adjustment to being at home and not working. Scoring ranges from positive satisfaction with this aspect of life, to active dissatisfaction.

(v) Presenting image

This is a clinical rating, based on the extent to which the parent presents as happy, well-adjusted and confident, as opposed to anxious and disturbed. In a sense this rating corresponds to the clinical assessment of the child (see 4.6.2.2).

(vi) Communication with child

Provides information about the manner in which the parent is able to communicate with the child, particularly in relation to emotionally-laden subjects such as the divorce itself. Scoring varies from parents who are able to communicate freely with their children to those who maintain rigid barriers regarding what they are able to tell the child (see 4.6.4.2).

4.6.3.2 Perception of aspects of the divorce experience

The following three variables are concerned with the custodial parent's perception of certain aspects of the divorce experience:

(i) Perception of access-related problems

Parents were asked how successful the access arrangements had been, both from their own point of view, and also whether they considered that the child had experienced any difficulties as a result thereof. This was rated on a 5-point scale, from 0 to 4, ranging from no problems (0) to severe difficulties necessitating referral for legal and/or psychological assistance (4) (see Appendix 20).

(ii) Perception of child's divorce-relation problems

Parents were asked to outline what they considered to be problems experienced by the child as a result of the divorce. An attempt was made to elicit an opinion regarding problems manifested at the time of the divorce, as well as at the time of the interview (see 4.6.2.5 (ii)). This was rated on a 5-point scale from 0 to 4 for problems "then" (time of divorce) and "now" (time of examination). Scoring ranged from the parent's perception of the child as well-adjusted, with no apparent ill-effects as a result of the divorce (0) to severe behavioural and/or emotional problems necessitating referral for help (4) (see Appendix 21).

(iii) Problems as a single parent

Parents were asked to outline problems experienced in child-rearing as a single parent. This was rated on a 5-point scale, from 0 to 4. Scoring ranged from parents who experienced no more difficulties than those expected in any ordinary two-parent household (0) to parents who experienced extreme difficulties and were unable to cope without help (4) (see Appendix 22).

4.6.3.3 Occupational role

This refers to whether or not the parent was working.

4.6.3.4 Analysis of custody awards

The reason why custody was awarded to the parent was elicited. This could have resulted out of five possibilities:

- (i) Mutual agreement between parents;
- (ii) contested custody;
- (iii) parent's conviction as to spouse's unsuitability as custodian, but without litigation (i.e. spouse accepted situation);
- (iv) non-custodial parent abandoned family;
- (v) child's preference.

4.6.3.5 Attitude toward counselling at time of divorce

See 4.5.1.4.

4.6.4 Parent-child interactional variables

4.6.4.1 Parent-child bond

The degree of closeness between the child and the custodial parent was rated on a 3-point scale from 0 to 2 from data obtained in the interviews with both parent and child.

The child's bond with the non-custodial parent was rated on a 3-point scale according to the way the child according to the way the child described it (see Appendix 23).

4.6.4.2 Parent-child communication

Level of communication between the custodial parent and the child was rated on a 4-point scale from 0 to 3 from the point of view of both parent and child. Parent-child communication was considered in general terms, and in addition, information was sought regarding the way in which the parent had explained the divorce to the child. Significant here was whether or not the child considered that his questions relating to reasons for the divorce had been satisfactorily answered, and to what extent he had been able to discuss these matters with the parent, and vice versa. Scores ranged from close and open communication (0) to lack of any meaningful communication (3) (see Appendix 23).

4.6.5 Family constellation variables

4.6.5.1 Siblings

Each child was given a code value of 0, 1 or 2 according to whether there were no siblings, one sibling or more than one sibling.

4.6.5.2 Step-parents

Remarriage of both custodial and non-custodial parent was noted. Where the custodial parent had not remarried, the family was regarded as a single-parent family.

4.6.5.3 Step- and half-siblings

Each child received a code value of 0 or 1 according to whether or not there were step-siblings, and a separate code value of 0 or 1 according to whether or not there

were half-siblings. This rating was obtained for both custodial and non-custodial homes.

4.6.5.4 Extended family

Presence of extended family members living in the home (e.g. grandparents) was noted.

4.6.5.5 Domestic servants

As domestic servants are a common feature of South African homes, it was considered relevant to note how many families in the sample employed full-time servants.

4.6.6 Socio-economic variables

Two aspects of changes in socio-economic status were considered:

4.6.6.1 Change in financial status

This provided information regarding change in financial status of the custodial parent following the divorce. The expected direction of such a change, if any, was in terms of fall-off, particularly for mothers. A code value of 1 or 0 was given to each child according to whether or not the custodial parent had suffered a change (deterioration) in financial status following the divorce.

4.6.6.2 Move to new home

This provided information regarding changes in living and accommodation arrangements following the divorce, e.g. move from house to flat. A code value of 1 or 0 was given to each child according to whether or not the custodial family had moved to a new home following the divorce.

FINDINGS

- 5.1 Introduction: Method of analysis used
- 5.2 Divorce variables
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- 5.8 Illustrative examples of projective test findings

5.1 INTRODUCTION: METHOD OF ANALYSIS USED

The contingency tables generated by this research were analysed using the chi-square test statistic (Siegel, 1956; Conover, 1971). In analysing each contingency table the probability, p , reflects the level of confidence with which the null-hypothesis can be rejected. The null-hypothesis states that there is no difference between observed frequencies and frequencies expected on the basis of complete homogeneity of distribution. When p is sufficiently low the data is inspected in order to ascertain the pattern and direction of the relationship. In presenting findings, it should be stated that all ratings emanate from one source, i.e. the writer. In an attempt to counteract this, it was decided to adopt the following conventions, which are slightly more stringent than those normally employed:

NS	accept null hypothesis	$p > 0,10$	not significant
$p < 0,10$	accept null hypothesis	$0,05 < p < 0,10$	suggestive trend
$p < 0,05$	reject null hypothesis	$0,01 < p < 0,05$	strong trend
$p < 0,01$	reject null hypothesis	$0,001 < p < 0,01$	significant
$p < 0,001$	reject null hypothesis	$0,0001 < p < 0,001$	highly significant
$p < 0,0001$	reject null hypothesis	$0,00001 < p < 0,001$	highly significant

In conventional contingency table analysis, the test statistic approximates closely to a chi-square distribution if the expected frequencies (as opposed to the observed frequencies) in each cell exceed a numerical value of five. According to Conover (1971), however, if most of the expected values are nearly the same they can be as small as 1,0 without endangering the validity of the test. In the present analysis, where necessary, adjoining categories have been merged to ensure that expected values are large enough for the chi-square approximation to hold.

5.2 DIVORCE VARIABLES

5.2.1 Custodial pattern (sex of custodial parent)

Table 5:1 Sex Distribution of Children Awarded to Mother or Father

	Mother	Father	Total
Boys	23	21	44
Girls	28	20	48
Total	51	41	N = 92
			df = 1
			$\chi^2 = 0,34$
			p = 0,60

Table 5:1 suggests that in practice, sex of child is not related to sex of the parent to whom custody is awarded.

Table 5:2 Age Distribution of Children (at time of divorce) Awarded to Mother or Father¹

Age	Children Awarded to Father	Children Awarded to Mother	Total
0 to 2-11	3	9	12
3-0 to 6-11	12	14	26
7-0 to 6-11	20	22	42
13 +	6	6	12
Total	41	51	N = 92
			df = 3
			$\chi^2 = 2,19$
			p = 0,60

¹ Age-range of sample at time of divorce: 3 months to 16 years.

5.2.1.3 Age of child at time of divorce

No significant relationship emerged between sex of the custodial parent, age of the child at the time of the divorce, and adjustment.

Children who were under 7 years of age at the time of the divorce and reared by their fathers were not found, by inspection, to be less well-adjusted than the group as a whole.

Table 5:4 Relationship Between Sex of Custodial Parent, and Selected Variables (N = 51)
(See Appendix 28 except for Remarriage)

Variable	p Value
Adjustment of Parent	NS
Change in Financial Status	< 0,0001
Move to New Home	< 0,10
Remarriage	0,01 (see Table 5:31)

5.2.1.4 Adjustment of custodial parent

No relationship emerged between sex of custodial parent and adjustment of parent. There was nothing to suggest that the fathers in the sample were better or worse adjusted than were the mothers.

5.2.1.5 Change in financial status

A highly significant relationship was revealed between sex of the custodial parent, and financial status: mothers almost exclusively underwent a change (i.e. fall-off) in financial status after the divorce.

5.2.1.6 Move to new home

There was a suggestive trend indicating that more mothers than fathers move to a new home following the divorce.

5.2.1.7 Remarriage

(See 5.4.4; Table 5:31.)

5.2.1.8 Reasons for custody arrangements

Table 5:5 Analysis of Why Custody Awarded to Parent

Reason for Custody Award	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Mutually Agreed Between Parents	20	5	25
Contested	1	4	5
Spouse Perceived as Unsuited	2	5	7
Non-custodial Parent Abandoned Family	6	6	12
Child's Choice	0	2	2
Total	29	22	51

Table 5:6 Reasons Why Child Awarded to Custodial Parent

Mutual Agreement	Contested	Spouse Perceived as Unsuited	Non-custodial parent abandoned family	Child's preference	Total
49	9	9	22	3	92

From Tables 5:5 and 5:6 it would appear that the majority of custody awards are made on the basis of mutual agreement between parents. Furthermore, the great majority of mutually-agreed upon awards are made to the mother.

The second largest group of custodial placements arises out of abandonment of the family by one spouse. It appears that this occurs to a similar extent in parents of either sex.

Table 5:5 suggests that fathers tend to be awarded custody when there is uncertainty regarding the mother's suitability as custodian, or when custody is contested. Does this imply that custody contests only occur when there is evidence of unsuitability on the part of the mother? Further research would need to be done in order to answer this question.

5.2.1.9 Child's stated preference for custodial parent

This refers to the extent to which the children were satisfied with the custody decision made "in their best interests", or to what extent they would have preferred the other parent as custodian.

Table 5:7 Child's Stated Preference for Custodial Parent

	Custodial Parent	Non-custodial Parent	Unable to say	Total
Mother custody	35	7	9	51
Father custody	24	6	11	41
Total	59	13	20	92

Table 5:7 indicates that 59 children were satisfied with the decision made for them, while 13 were not. The latter

group stated that they felt closer to the non-custodial parent. Twenty children were unable to state a definite preference; their very hesitation in this regard suggests that they may not have been altogether happy with the custody arrangements.

5.2.1.10 Summary of findings in relation to sex of custodial parent

The most important finding was that the sex of the custodial parent was of no significance in relation to the child's adjustment following parental divorce.

Results revealed that the children in the sample had not been awarded to parents on the basis of either sex or age. The majority of custody awards were made by mutual agreement between the parents. The findings suggest that fathers tend to be awarded custody when there is doubt regarding the mother's suitability.

No relationship emerged between sex of the custodial parent and parent's level of adjustment.

Mothers were found to experience significantly more depletion in financial status than were fathers. More custodial fathers than mothers remarry.

5.2.2 Access pattern

5.2.2.1 Frequency

Table 5:8 Relationship Between Access Frequency and Selected Variables

(see Appendix 29)

Variable	N ¹	p Value
Adjustment	92	NS
Bond with Custodial Parent	92	NS
Bond with Non-custodial Parent	88	0,01
Turbulence	82	0,01
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Now)	92	< 0,05
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Then)	92	< 0,01
Child's Access Problems	92	NS
Age at Divorce	92	NS
Sex of Custodial Parent	92	NS

(i) Adjustment

No relationship was found between access frequency and the child's adjustment level.

(ii) Bond with custodial parent

No relationship was found between access frequency and bond between child and custodial parent.

¹ Ratings for bond with non-custodial parent were only obtained for 88 children.

Ratings for turbulence were only obtained for 82 children (see Appendix 24).

(iii) Bond with non-custodial parent

A significant relationship emerged between access frequency and the child's bond with the non-custodial parent, the closer the bond, the more frequent the access.

(iv) Turbulence

There was a significant link between access frequency and turbulence: the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less contact between the children and the non-custodial parent.

(v) Child's perception of divorce-related problems

There was a strong trend suggesting that the more often the child saw the non-custodial parent, the less likely he would be later on to perceive himself as having problems associated with the divorce; the less frequent the access, the more likely he would be to perceive himself as having divorce-related problems.

Access frequency was significantly linked with the child's perception of problems at the time of the divorce: those children reporting (retrospectively) least problems around the time of the divorce were those who had maintained frequent contact with the non-custodial parent.

(vi) Child's perception of access-related problems

No relationship was found between frequency of access and the child's perception of problems associated with access.

(vii) Age at divorce

No relationship emerged between access frequency and age of the child at the time of the divorce.

(viii) Sex of custodial parent

Access frequency was not related to sex of the custodial parent. Non-custodial mothers did not see their children more frequently than did non-custodial fathers.

Table 5:9 Analysis of Frequency of Access

Access Frequency	Frequent	Moderately frequent	Occasional	None	Total
Number of Children	19	31	33	9	92

From Table 5:9 it is seen that a total of 50 children out of 92 maintained frequent or moderately frequent contact with the non-custodial parent.

5.2.2.2 Free accessTable 5:10: Relationship Between Free Access and Selected Variables

(see Appendix 30)

Variable	N	p Value
Adjustment	92	NS
Bond with Custodial Parent	92	NS
Bond with Non-custodial Parent	88	< 0,10
Turbulence	82	< 0,0001
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Now)	92	< 0,001
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Then)	92	< 0,01
Child's Perception of Access Problems	92	< 0,001
Age at Divorce	92	< 0,01

(i) Adjustment

Free access was not found to be significantly related to adjustment.

(ii) Parent-child bond

No significant relationships emerged between free access and the child's bond with either the custodial or the non-custodial parent. There was only a suggestive trend connecting bond with the non-custodial parent and free access.

(iii) Turbulence

In accordance with what one would expect, a highly significant relationship emerged between free access and level of inter-parental turbulence: the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less likelihood of free access between the child and the non-custodial parent.

(iv) Child's perception of divorce-related problems

A highly significant relationship emerged between the child's perception of problems associated with the divorce, and free access: children who perceived that they were free to see the non-custodial parent whenever they wished, reported far less problems, both as they remembered them to be at the time of the divorce, as well as at the time of the examination.

(v) Child's perception of access-related problems

As was true of (iv) above, the child's perception of problems associated with access was closely related to perception of access as free: children for whom access was free reported significantly fewer problems.

(vi) Age at divorce

Analysis revealed that children who were under 7 years of age at the time of the divorce were significantly less likely to have free contact with the non-custodial parent, than were children who were older than 7 years at the time of the divorce.

Table 5:11 Analysis of Child's Perception of Type of Contact with Non-custodial Parent

Type of Contact	Free	Regulated	Occasional	None	Total
Number of Children	38	27	18	9	92

The discrepancies between Tables 5:9 and 5:11 can be explained as follows:

Although only 18 children perceived that there was a limit imposed upon their contact with the non-custodial parent, in actual practice 33 children saw this parent only occasionally. In seven cases this was because the non-custodial parent had gone to live in another town. In eight further instances the children themselves elected to see the non-custodial parent only occasionally. Fourteen children elected not to see the non-custodial parent frequently, in spite of knowing that they were free to do so.

Thus in general children tended to have less actual contact with the non-custodial parent than they could have had. Some of those children who perceived that they had freedom to see this parent as often as they liked in fact elected to maintain only moderately frequent (regular) or occasional contact. Does this suggest that the important thing is the child's perception that he has freedom of choice regarding access, rather than the actual amount of time spent with this parent? (See 6.3.1.2 (v a)).

5.2.2.3 Expressed preference for degree of contact with non-custodial parent

Table 5:12 Preferred Type of Access

	Free	Regulated	Occasional	None	Unable to say	Total
Children in Mother's Custody	30	9	2	2	8	51
Children in Father's Custody	26	3	7	2	3	41
Total	56	12	9	4	11	92

The most important finding emerging from this analysis is the large number of children who expressed a preference for free access. Sixty-one percent of the children reported that their choice would have been free access, as against only 13% who stated a preference for regulated access. This corroborates the finding reported in 5.2.2.2 (iv). Some examples of what the children themselves said illustrate how highly they appeared to value this concept.

"If my father didn't pop in often, we'd lose touch and he wouldn't be like a father to me."
(Boy, 18, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"Seeing my father often is what kept things going. I'd have been very bitter otherwise."
(Girl, 16, mother custody, age 8 at divorce.)

"Regulated access would have put me against my mother; I'd have hated it."
(Boy, 19, father custody, age 8 at divorce.)

"If there's something to talk to your mother about and you have to wait till a weekend, you forget, and the problems get buried."
(Male, 28, father custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"I want the freedom of going any time I like."
(Girl, 14, mother custody, age 5 at divorce.)

"Children should be able to see their father at least three times a week. You should be able to say to your friends 'my Dad this, my Dad that ...'"
(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"It would've been awful to see my father only one weekend a month; if that was the case it wouldn't be worthwhile to see him at all. The perfect divorce arrangement is to see your father as often as you can - otherwise it'd be like not having a father. I can say now I've got a father!"
(Boy, 12, mother custody, age 5 at divorce.)

An interesting difference between the mother-custody and father-custody children presents itself. It is seen from Table 5:12 that seven children living with fathers as against only two living with mothers expressed a preference for occasional contact with the non-custodial parent. Could this be related to the finding (see 5.2.1.8) that custody tends to be awarded to the father when there is some evidence of unsuitability on the part of the mother? In order to answer this question, the seven children who expressed a preference for only occasional contact with the mother were more closely questioned. Their reasons are listed in Table 5:13.

Table 5:13. Reasons Given by Children for Electing to See Mothers Only Occasionally

Mother abandoned family	3
Child disliked mother, without pressure from father	2
Father made it clear to child that he disapproved of contact with mother	1
Child developed close relationship with step-mother and had little need to be with mother	1
Total	7

Table 5:13 reveals that in 42% of this group, the child's preference to maintain only occasional contact with the mother was related to the fact that the mother had abandoned the family. In view of the small number of children involved, however, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions.

Table 5:14 Child's Opinion Regarding Whether there had been Sufficient Contact with Non-custodial Parent

	Enough Contact	Would have preferred more Contact	Unable to say	Total
Mother custody	29	18	4	51
Father custody	22	13	6	41
Total	51	31	10	92

It is seen from Table 5:14 that more than half of the children (55%) considered that they had (or had had) sufficient contact with the non-custodial parent; a third of the sample (33%) considered that they had not had as much contact as they would have liked with this parent. The proportion of children expressing these feelings was equivalent whether they were in their mother's or in their father's custody.

.2.2.4 Court order of "Reasonable Access"

Table 5:15 Contact Between Child and Non-custodial Parent Following Court Order of "Reasonable Access"

Frequent	Regulated	Occasional	No Access
6	7	8	2

In 23 cases there had been a court ruling of "reasonable" access. Analysis of what actually took place thereafter in terms of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent reveals a considerable variety of outcomes. This suggests either that parents interpreted the term "reasonable" in different ways, or that they were in fact disregarding the court ruling.

5.2.2.5 Summary of findings in relation to access

Access pattern was not found to be statistically related to the child's level of adjustment. However, a highly significant relationship emerged between both frequency and freedom of access, and the child's perception of problems associated with the divorce: children who saw the non-custodial parent frequently or freely reported far fewer problems.

Interparental turbulence was found to be significantly related to access pattern: the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less likelihood of either free or frequent access.

The strength of the child's bond with the custodial parent was not found to be related to access pattern. Bond with the non-custodial parent was related to frequency of access, the closer the bond, the more frequent the access.

It was suggested from analysis of what the children said, that the knowledge that they were free to see the non-custodial parent when they wished, might be more meaningful than the amount of time spent with this parent in actual practice.

A third of the sample considered that they had not had as much contact as they would have liked with the non-custodial parent.

It was suggested that the court ruling of "reasonable access" is interpreted by parents in a variety of ways.

5.2.3 Interparental turbulence

Table 5:16 Relationship of Degree of Turbulence
to Selected Variables (p values)

(See Appendix 31, except where otherwise indicated)

	Boys (N = 39)	Girls (N = 43)	All (N = 82)
Child's Adjustment	< 0,0001	< 0,05	< 0,0001
Bond with Custodial Parent	NS	NS	< 0,10
Bond with Non-custodial parent	0,05	NS	0,001
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Now)	NS	0,001	< 0,0001
Child's Access-Related Problems	0,10	< 0,001	0,0001
Access Frequency (Appendix 29)	NS	0,01	0,01
Free Access (Appendix 30)	0,0001	0,05	< 0,0001
Parent's Perception of Child's Problems (Now)	0,01	0,001	< 0,0001
Parent's Perception of Child's Problems (Then)	NS	0,01	< 0,01
Parent's Problems as a Single Parent	NS ¹	NS	< 0,05 ²
Adjustment, Custodial Parent (Appendix 33)	< 0,01	< 0,01	< 0,0001
Clinical Assessment	< 0,01	< 0,01	< 0,0001

1 N = 38

2 N = 81

5.2.3.1 Adjustment

Table 5:17 Percentages of Well- and Poorly-Adjusted Children in Relation to Level of Inter-parental Turbulence

	Low Turbulence	High Turbulence	Total
Well-adjusted	45,7%	6,2%	51,9%
Poorly-adjusted	16,1%	32,1%	48,2%
Total	61,8%	38,3%	100,1%

Interparental turbulence was found to be highly significant in relation to the adjustment of the children: where there was a high level of turbulence between the parents, the children were poorly adjusted.

Table 5:18 Children's Response to Question: Should Parents Stay Together "for the sake of the children"?

	Parents Together in Conflict	Divorce	Unable to say	Total
Mother Custody	5	41	5	51
Father Custody	4	32	5	41
Total	9	73	10	92

Children expressed an overwhelming preference for parents not to stay together in an unhappy marriage. Seventy-three children (79%) stated in the strongest terms that they would not have chosen to have their parents stay together in conflict, and that they perceived this as extremely destructive.

"I remember horrible strife and conflict; a nightmare that would have killed me had it not ended."
(Male, 22, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"The marriage was the trauma, not the divorce."
(Male, 26, mother custody, age 16 at divorce.)

"When my father left finally, I was very glad.
I felt myself grow in confidence daily following
the divorce. Before the divorce I used to feel
nervous of my father and was always anticipating
blow-ups."
(Female, 21, mother custody, age 12 at divorce.)

"Staying together would be the worst thing they
could have done; the quarrels would be so upsetting".
(Male, 20, father custody, age 10 at divorce.)

Nine children expressed regret that their parents had not stayed together; of these, four were below 13 years at the time of the investigation, two were young women who had recently divorced (the only two divorcees in the sample), and the remaining three, made up of one 24 year old man and two girls in their late teens, had all been rated as poorly adjusted.

Ten children were unable to state their preference in this matter; nine of these were 14 and below.

5.2.3.2 Parent-child bond

(i) Bond with custodial parent

No relationship emerged between interparental turbulence and bond with the custodial parent; only a weak trend in this direction was evident.

(ii) Bond with non-custodial parent

A highly significant link was found between interparental turbulence and non-custodial parent-child bond: it was strongly revealed that the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less close the bond between non-custodial parents and children.

5.2.3.3 Child's perception of divorce-related problems

Turbulence was highly significant in relation to the children's perception of problems arising out of the divorce: a high level of turbulence was associated with perception of many problems by the children.

5.2.3.4 Child's perception of problems in relation to access

As was the case with divorce-related problems, the more turbulent the parental relationship, the more likelihood of the child experiencing difficulties with regard to access arrangements.

5.2.3.5 Access frequency

(See 5.2.2.1 (iv)).

5.2.3.6 Free access

(See 5.2.2.2 (iii)).

5.2.3.7 Parents' perception of child's divorce-related problems

A highly significant relationship emerged between inter-parental turbulence, and the parents' perception of divorce-associated problems in their children: parents who had engaged in turbulent interaction with their spouses reported significantly more problems in their children. This could simply reflect the finding that the children themselves are in fact more disturbed when there is a high level of turbulence (see 5.2.3.1). It could, however, also suggest that disturbed parents are more likely to perceive problems in their children (see 5.4.1.2).

5.2.3.8 Problems as a single parent

There was a strong trend suggesting that parents experience more difficulties with regard to child-rearing (i.e. as a single parent, after the divorce), if the interparental relationship was a turbulent one.

5.2.3.9 Adjustment of custodial parent

(See 5.4.1.4).

5.2.3.10 Contested custody

The nine children whose custody had been contested all came from families rated high on turbulence. This is in agreement with what one would expect: the very fact of a contest suggests that there is hostility (i.e. a turbulent relationship) between the parents (see Appendix 25).

5.2.3.11 Summary of findings in relation to interparental turbulence

Interparental turbulence emerged as the single most significant factor in relation to the adjustment of the children in the sample: children from turbulent backgrounds presented as least well-adjusted.

Turbulence was also found to be significant in the relationship between the children and their non-custodial parents: the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less likelihood of a close bond between the child and the non-custodial parent.

Children from turbulent homes reported significantly more problems in relation to access arrangements, as well as to the divorce itself.

5.3 CHILD VARIABLES5.3.1 Adjustment of child (statistically determined)Table 5:19 Child's Adjustment in Relation to
Selected Variables (p values)(See Appendix 32 except where other-
wise indicated)

	Boys (N = 45)	Girls (N = 47)	All (N = 92)
Sex of Custodial Parent (Appendix 25)	NS	NS	NS
Sex of Child	NS	NS	NS
Age at Divorce	-	-	NS
Turbulence (Appendix 31) (N = 82)	< 0,0001	< 0,05	< 0,0001
Access Frequency (Appendix 29)	NS	NS	NS
Free Access (Appendix 30)	0,05	NS	NS
Parent-Child Communication (Appendix 35)	NS	NS	NS
Bond with Custodial Parent	NS	NS	NS
Bond with Non-custodial Parent (N = 88)	NS	NS	NS
Child's Perception of Divorce-Related Problems (Now)	NS	0,01	< 0,01
Parent's Adjustment	0,05	NS	< 0,001
Remarriage, Custodial Parent	NS	NS	NS
Move to New Home	NS	0,10	< 0,10
Change in Financial Status	NS	NS	< 0,10
Siblings	NS	NS	NS
Clinical Assessment	0,0001	0,0001	< 0,0001

5.3.1.1 Sex of custodial parent

(See 5.2.1.1)

5.3.1.2 Sex of child

No relationship emerged between sex of the child and adjustment.

5.3.1.3 Age at time of divorce

(See 5.2.1.3)

5.3.1.4 Turbulence

(See 5.2.3.1)

5.3.1.5 Access

(See 5.2.2)

5.3.1.6 Parent-child communication

(See 5.5.2)

5.3.1.7 Parent-child bond

(See 5.5.1)

5.3.1.8 Child's perception of divorce-related problems

(i) Perception of problems in relation to adjustment

A trend emerged suggesting that the child's perception of divorce-related problems was related to adjustment: the better adjusted the child, the less likelihood of him perceiving problems in relation to the divorce.

(ii) Extent to which children considered themselves adversely affected as a result of the divorce

Table 5:20 Child's Assessment of Extent to Which Adversely Affected by the Divorce¹

	Badly Affected	Initial Difficulties Only	Not Adversely Affected	Benefited	Unable to say
Mother Custody	19	6	22	13	1
Father Custody	12	6	18	9	3
Total	31	12	40	22	4

¹ Numbers add up to more than the total sample, as some children gave multiple responses to this question.

Forty children stated that they had not been negatively affected by the divorce, while 22 stated that they had in fact benefited as a result thereof. The latter group considered themselves more mature than their peers, and more understanding of human emotions:

"I feel it made me more aware of the relationships between people. I'm more understanding of people. My close friends have told me I'm very sensitive to people and their emotions."
(Male, 20, mother custody, age 12 at divorce.)

"Children from divorced homes have to emerge more mature because they have to stand on their own two feet."
(Female, 16, father custody, age 7 at divorce.)

"I've gained, I'm more aware, independent and a stronger person because of the divorce. Children whose parents have divorced definitely don't have problems. I've learnt a lot."
(Female, 16, mother custody, age 8 at divorce.)

"I've definitely gained as well from the divorce. It teaches you to battle, to fend for yourself, to toughen up."

(Female, 19, father custody, age 8 at divorce.)

"I've gained very much from the divorce - a tolerance and understanding of people. I don't feel restricted by social conventions."

(Male, 28, father custody, age 13 at divorce.)

Twelve children stated that although they had been affected initially, they had subsequently made a good adjustment. Thirty-one children considered themselves to have been negatively affected as a result of the divorce. Of these, twenty were found to come from homes with a high degree of interparental turbulence. This suggests that it is the turbulence associated with the divorce, and not the divorce itself that leads to distress in children.

The above analysis reveals that less children regarded themselves as adversely affected by the divorce ($N = 31$) than those who considered themselves unaffected ($N = 40$). Twenty-five percent (22 children) stated that they regarded the divorce as a growth experience (see examples above).

(iii) Improvement in child's perception of divorce-related problems with passage of time

Table 5:21 Comparison of Ratings¹ for Divorce-Related Problems at Time of Divorce and at Time of Examination

	Rating	At Divorce	At Examination		
			Improved	Same	Worse
	0	34	0	33	1
	1	16	6	9	1
	2	23	14	9	0
	3	14	6	8	0
	4	5	2	3	0
Total	0 - 4	92	28	62	2

¹ For scoring criteria, see Appendix 19.

The analysis in Table 5:21 indicates that only two children perceived an increase in divorce-related problems with the passage of time.

Table 5:22 Analysis of Improvement in Children
Actually Rated as Having Problems
at Time of Divorce

Rating	Divorce	Examination			% Improved
		Improved	Same	Worse	
1,2,3,4	58	28	29	1	48%
2,3,4	42	22	20	0	52%
3,4	19	8	11	0	42%

A total of 58 children were rated for problems (of any severity, that is, including the whole range from mild to extreme) at the time of the divorce. By the time of the examination there was a decrease in problems in 28 children; 29 had remained the same, and for one child problems had increased. Therefore, for almost half of the sample, divorce-related problems had improved with the passage of time. The ratio of improvement in those children for whom problems had been moderate to severe initially (N = 42) was higher: 52% of this group had improved by the time of the examination.

Of the 19 children rated as having had severe problems at the time of the divorce (scores 3 or 4) 11 still perceived these problems as severe at the time of the examination. Inspection of clinical records of these 11 cases revealed that in all but one, there was an extremely high level of interparental turbulence. In four families there was still on-going litigation.

The above analysis suggests that as the divorce recedes with time, children's divorce-related problems tend to

abate. It is likely that continuing interparental turbulence impedes the improvement of children's divorce-related problems. (In interpreting these findings it is important to remember that divorce-related problems as pertaining at the time of the marital dissolution were retrospectively rated. Thus the rating reflects the children's perception of their problems rather than a comparative objective measurement of these).

(iv) Specific problems experienced as a result of the divorce

The following list (Table 5:23) was compiled from what the children said in the interview.

Table 5:23 Specific Divorce-Related Problems¹

Description of Problem	Father Custody	Mother Custody	Whole Sample
Missed family life; envied children with intact family	9	11	20
Missed specific aspects of nurturant behaviour, e.g. supervision of homework, school lunch being prepared	7	9	16
Anxiety re money	1	12	13
Difficulty in adjusting to step-parents	4	9	13
Restricted contact with non-custodial parent	8	3	11
Felt "different" to peer group	2	8	10
Felt need for discipline	0	6	6
Embarrassed with regard to peers	1	4	5
Sent to boarding-school	2	2	4
Upset to give up family home	2	2	4
Reacted badly to and developed fear of violence	2	1	3
Felt abandoned	0	3	3
Upset that parents did not explain reasons for the divorce	0	3	3
Upset because mother had to work	0	3	3
Forced to see non-custodial parent (i.e. by custodial parent)	0	2	2
Felt bitter about human relationships	1	1	2
Aware of loneliness of custodial parent	2	0	2
Too much responsibility (e.g. household chores, looking after siblings)	2	0	2
Feelings of insecurity regarding the future	2	0	2
Difficulty in relating to step-siblings	0	1	1
Felt disappointed in parents	0	1	1
Anxiety about well-being of custodial parent	0	1	1
Upset that own children would not have "normal" grandparents	1	0	1

¹ Number of responses add up to more than total sample, as some children gave multiple responses.

As might have been expected, those children who reported that they had lacked discipline were in their mother's custody. Unexpected findings were that eight mother-custody as opposed to only two father-custody children considered themselves "different" to other children, and that four mother-custody children as against only one father-custody child experienced feelings of embarrassment in relation to peers. Anxiety regarding money was experienced almost exclusively by mother-custody children.

From these data, it is suggested that custodial fathers may be more likely to indicate disapproval of the child's continued relationship with the mother than vice versa, as seen by the 8:3 ratio of children who reported being prevented from seeing as much of non-custodial parent as they would have liked. This might possibly be related to the reasons why the father was made custodian in the first place (see 5.2.1.8).

Table 5:24 Parental Behaviours Experienced as Most Distressing

Description of Parental Behaviour	Number of Children who Experienced Behaviour as Distressing
Parents communicated with child in derogatory way about each other, creating situation of divided loyalties	48
Arguments between parents	15
Restriction of access to non-custodial parent by custodial parent	11
Criticism of parents by step-parents, and vice versa	6
Custodial parent compared child to non-custodial parent in derogatory way	5
Sexual association of parent with another person	3

Table 5:24 reveals clearly that children react extremely badly to situations where the parents denigrate each other. The sense of divided loyalties that this creates for the children would appear to be even more upsetting than overt arguments between parents.

(v) Did the divorce affect child's desire to marry?

Table 5:25 Children's Response to Question: Did the Divorce Affect Attitude to Own Marriage?

	Yes	No	Can't Say	Totals
Mother custody	3	40	8	51
Father custody	3	31	7	41
Total	6	71	15	92

From Table 5:25 it is seen that the great majority of children denied having been "put off" marriage as a result of their parent's divorce.

Table 5:26 Present Marital Status of Sample

	Males	Females	Total
Married	5	6	11
Engaged	0	2	2
Divorced	0	2	2

Of the 11 members of the sample who were married, eight were "very happy", two were "moderately happy", and one was experiencing marital difficulties.

5.3.1.9 Parent's adjustment

(See 5.4.1)

5.3.1.10 Family constellation

(See 5.6)

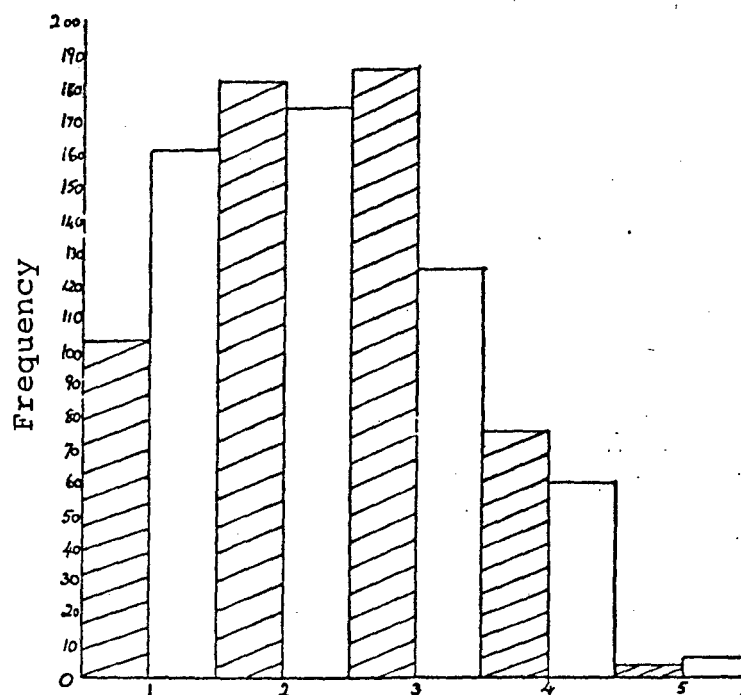
5.3.1.11 Socio-economic variables

(See 5.7)

5.3.2 General adjustment of sample

Figure 5:1 Histograms¹ of Ratings of Sample and Control Group on Individual Variables making up Adjustment

(See Appendix 25 and 26)



Ratings on individual variables making up adjustment

¹ The lower the scores, the better the adjustment.
Unshaded bars refer to sample.
Shaded bars refer to control.

(i) Statistical assessment of adjustment

Inspection of the sample distribution by itself did not suggest that this came from a deviant population (see Figure 5:1).

(ii) Clinical assessment of adjustment

The children were not in general assessed clinically as maladjusted. The relationship between the statistically determined adjustment score and the clinical assessment of adjustment was found to be very close ($p < 0,0001$, see Appendix 32). There was thus a good congruence between the two approaches adopted.

(iii) Comparison between sample and control group

(See also Figure 5:1).

(a) Adjustment (statistically determined)

Table 5:27 Comparison Between Sample and Control Group: Adjustment

(See Appendix 25 and 26)

	Sample	Control			
Well-adjusted	13	14			
Poorly-adjusted	12	11			
Total	N = 25	N = 25	df = 2	$\chi^2 = 0,08$	p = 0,97

The null hypothesis that there was no difference in adjustment between the sample and the control group was accepted at a very high level of confidence.

(b) Clinical assessment of adjustmentTable 5:28 Comparison Between Sample and Control Group: Clinical Assessment

(See Appendix 25 and 26)

	Sample	Control			
Poor adjustment	6	4			
Fair adjustment	7	8			
Well-adjusted	12	13			
Total	N = 25	N = 25	df = 3	$\chi^2 = 0,51$	p = 0,93

The null hypothesis that there was no difference in adjustment (as assessed clinically by the writer) between the sample and the control group, was accepted at a very high level of confidence.

The above findings do not provide any evidence of deviant adjustment in the sample. This is in agreement with what the children themselves stated (see 5.3.1.8 (ii)).

5.3.3 Summary of findings in relation to child variables

The two most significant findings in relation to adjustment, namely that it is not affected by sex of the custodial parent, and that it is closely tied to interparental turbulence, have been reported in 5.2.1.1 and 5.2.3.1 respectively.

Analysis of the children's statements strongly suggested that in general they did not perceive themselves as having

been adversely affected by the divorce. In those cases where adverse divorce-related effects were reported the strong likelihood emerged that these were caused by the turbulence in the parental relationship, rather than by the divorce itself.

A comparison of the children's ratings of their divorce-related problems at the time of the divorce with those at the time of the examination, suggested that for many of them these problems tend to subside with the passage of time.

The most common divorce-related problems reported by the children were: awareness of missing family life and aspects of nurturant behaviour, anxiety regarding money, difficulty in adjusting to step-parents, restricted contact with the non-custodial parent, and perceiving themselves as "different" in relation to peers.

The parental behaviour experienced as most distressing by the children was denigration of the one by the other (see Table 5:24).

The writer's clinical assessment of the children, together with the results of a comparison of the sample with a matched control group, strongly suggested that the group as a whole cannot be regarded as maladjusted.

5.4 PARENT VARIABLES

5.4.1 Adjustment of custodial parent

Table 5:29 Relationship of Adjustment of Custodial Parent to Selected Variables

(See Appendix 33 except where otherwise indicated)

Variable	N	p Value
Sex of Custodial Parent (Appendix 28)	51	NS
Adjustment of Child (Appendix 32)	92	<0,001
Parent-Child Bond (Appendix 34)	92	<0,001
Turbulence	82	<0,0001
Parent-Child Communication	92	<0,01
Parent's Perception of Child's Divorce-Related Problems (Now)	92	<0,0001
Problems as a Single Parent	91	<0,0001
Free Access	92	<0,01
Parent's Access-Related Problems	92	<0,0001

5.4.1.1 Sex of custodial parent

(See 5.2.1.4)

5.4.1.2 Adjustment of child

A highly significant relationship was found between the adjustment of the custodial parent, and that of the child: parents rated as poorly adjusted were significantly more likely to have poorly adjusted children.

5.4.1.3 Parent-child bond

(See 5.5.1)

5.4.1.4 Turbulence

There was a highly significant relationship between the adjustment of the custodial parent and the degree of interparental turbulence: parents rated as well-adjusted were less likely to have engaged in turbulent interactions with their spouses.

5.4.1.5 Parent-child communication

(See 5.5.2)

5.4.1.6 Parents' perception of child's divorce-related problems

A highly significant relationship emerged between adjustment of the parent, and the parent's perception of the child's divorce-associated problems: parents rated as well-adjusted reported significantly less problems in their children. Does this mean that well-adjusted parents are less likely to detect problems in their children? Or does it imply that well-adjusted parents do not have children with problems? Evidence in support of the latter possibility was seen in 5.4.1.2 (see also 6.2.3.1).

5.4.1.7 Problems as a single parent

It was strongly suggested that the better adjusted the parents, the less likely they would be to experience problems in child-rearing as a single parent.

5.4.1.8 Free access

A highly significant link emerged between this variable and adjustment of the custodial parent, suggesting that free access is more likely to occur when parents are well-adjusted.

5.4.1.9 Parent's problems in relation to access

This variable was closely linked to the parent's adjustment, suggesting that well-adjusted parents are less likely to experience problems in relation to access.

5.4.2 Reasons why parent awarded custody

(See 5.2.1.8)

5.4.3 Stated need for counselling at time of divorce

Parents were asked to state whether or not they would have welcomed counselling at the time of the divorce. Of the 51 parents in the study, 28 (20 mothers and 8 fathers) expressed a strong need for, and belief in, the value of such counselling.

Table 5:30 Number of Mothers and Fathers who Viewed Counselling Positively/Negatively

	Mothers	Fathers	Total			
Yes to Counselling	20	8	28			
No to Counselling	9	14	23			
Total	29	22	N = 51	df = 1	$\chi^2 = 7,86$	$p < 0,001$

It appears that more mothers than fathers are willing to acknowledge a need for assistance and guidance at the time of the divorce. Does this mean that once fathers reach the point of being awarded custody, they are confident enough to cope unassisted with the task of child-rearing? (see 6.3.2.2 (i c)). Responses to this question ranged from "Desperately!" to "Blimey, no dear!"

5.4.4 Remarriage of parents

Table 5:31 Remarriage of Custodial and Non-custodial Mothers and Fathers

	Custodial Mothers	Custodial Fathers	Non-custodial Mothers	Non-custodial Fathers
Remarried	5	12 ¹	13 ¹	15 ¹
Remained Single	24	10	9	14
Total	29	N = 22	22	29
df = 1 $\chi^2 = 6,25$ p = 0,01				

1 One subsequently divorced

These findings suggest that fewer custodial mothers than fathers remarry. The fact that only 17% of the custodial mothers had remarried was surprising in the light of the impression gained during the process of tracing that the majority of them had remarried. Does this suggest that remarriage of the custodial mother is related to willingness to co-operate in the study? It may be the case that she is less likely to participate if she has remarried.

Remarriage of parents, either custodial or non-custodial, was not found to be related to the child's adjustment (see 5.6.3).

5.4.5 Summary of findings in relation to parent variables

Adjustment of the custodial parents was strongly linked to that of their children. The parent's adjustment was also significantly linked to the level of interparental turbulence, the higher the turbulence, the less well-adjusted the parent. Parents rated as well-adjusted reported significantly fewer divorce-associated problems in their children, fewer problems in relation to access arrangements, and fewer problems in child-rearing.

Well-adjusted parents were significantly more likely to allow free access; they established closer bonds with their children, and communicated more meaningfully with them.

More mothers than fathers acknowledged having had a need for counselling at the time of the divorce.

5.5 PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONAL VARIABLES

5.5.1 Parent-child bond

Table 5:32 Relationship of Strength of Parent-Child Bond to Selected Variables (p values)

(See Appendix 34 except where otherwise indicated)

	N	Custodial parent	N	Non-custodial parent
Child's Adjustment (Appendix 32)	92	NS	88	NS
Turbulence (Appendix 31)	82	< 0,10	82	0,001
Adjustment, Custodial parent	92	< 0,001	-	-
Parent-child Communication	92	0,01	-	-
Age at Divorce	92	NS	88	NS
Child's Divorce-Related Problems	92	< 0,10	88	NS
Parent's Perception of Child's Problems	92	NS	-	-

5.5.1.1 Child's adjustment

No significant relationship emerged between the adjustment of the child, and bond with either the custodial or the non-custodial parent (see 6.2.4).

5.5.1.2 Turbulence

(See 5.2.3.2)

5.5.1.3 Adjustment of custodial parent

A highly significant relationship emerged between the custodial parent's level of adjustment and the bond established with the child: the more well-adjusted the parent, the closer the bond.

5.5.1.4 Parent-child communication

(See 5.5.2)

5.5.1.5 Age at time of divorce

No relationships were found between the age of the child at the time of the divorce, and the bond established with either custodial or non-custodial parent.

5.5.1.6 Child's perception of divorce-related problems

There was only a suggestive trend indicating that children perceive themselves as having less problems in relation to the divorce if their bond with the custodial parent is close. This should be explored in further research (see 7.2).

5.5.1.7 Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems

Contrary to what might be expected, no relationship emerged between parent-child bond and the parent's perception of children's problems arising out of the divorce.

5.5.2 Parent-child communication

Table 5:33 Relationship of Parent-Child Communication¹ to Selected Variables

(See Appendix 35 except where otherwise indicated)

Variable	N	p value
Child's Adjustment	92	NS
Age at Divorce	92	NS
Sex of Custodial Parent	92	< 0,01 (in mother's favour)
Bond with Custodial Parent (Appendix 34)	92	< 0,01
Parent's Adjustment (Appendix 33)	92	< 0,01
Turbulence	82	NS

5.5.2.1 Child's adjustment

No relationship emerged between parent-child communication and the child's adjustment (see 6.3.2.2 (i)).

5.5.2.2 Age of child at divorce

Parent-child communication was not found to be related to the age of the child at the time of the divorce.

¹ A composite score for parent-child communication (as perceived by both parent and child) was used. This measure was considered justifiable on the basis of the p value <0,0001 for the relationship between separate ratings for communication as perceived by parent and by child (Appendix 35, P/O 8).

5.5.2.3 Sex of parent

A sex-linked pattern of parent-child communication was suggested: it appeared that mothers communicated better with their children than did fathers (see 6.3.2.2).

Table 5:34 Children's Responses to Question:
Was the Divorce Satisfactorily
Explained?

	Yes	No	"Hasn't thought about it"	Total	
Mother custody	27	15	9	51	
Father custody	14	20	7	41	
Total	41	35	16	N = 92	df = 1 $\chi^2 = 4,03$ p < 0,05

Forty-one children were satisfied with the explanation given by parent/s regarding the divorce, while 35 (over 33%) reported that their parents had not given them a satisfactory explanation. Sixteen children stated that they "hadn't thought about it".

Table 5:34 suggests that more mother-custody children appear to be satisfied with the explanation of the divorce. Does this suggest that mothers find it easier to explain these matters to children than do fathers? (see 6.3.2.2).

5.5.2.4 Bond with custodial-parent

Results indicated that, as might be anticipated, the closer the bond between the child and the custodial parent, the more likelihood of communication between them.

5.5.2.5 Parent's adjustment

Adjustment of the custodial parent was closely linked to the level of parent-child communication. The implication of this is that the better adjusted the parent, the more likelihood of meaningful communication with the child.

5.5.2.6 Turbulence

No significant findings emerged linking turbulence and parent-child communication.

5.5.3 Summary of findings in relation to parent-child interactional variables

Both parent-child bond (custodial parent) and level of communication between parent and child were found to be significantly linked to the adjustment of the custodial parent: well-adjusted parents established closer bonds with their children, and communicated more meaningfully with them than did poorly adjusted parents.

Bond with the non-custodial parent was closely linked with interparental turbulence: the more turbulent the parental relationship, the less likelihood of a close bond between the child and the non-custodial parent.

A sex-linked pattern of parent-child communication was suggested, mothers communicating better with their children than fathers.

5.6 FAMILY CONSTELLATION VARIABLES

5.6.1 Siblings

Presence of siblings was not found (statistically) to be related to the child's adjustment level (Table 5:19, Appendix 32).

Table 5:35 Child's Assessment of Importance of Siblings in Post-Divorce Adjustment

	Siblings were a source of help	Of no help	Not Applicable	Total
Mother custody	28	15	8	51
Father custody	21	17	3	41
Total	49	32	11	92

Each child was asked to state to what extent having siblings had helped him in adjusting to the divorce. Table 5:35 suggests that it is more likely than not that children derive comfort from their siblings. However, the fact that 33% of the sample stated that the presence of siblings had made "no difference" to them is important when discussing the advisability or otherwise of "splitting" siblings (see 6.2.5.3).

5.6.2 Step- and half-siblings

Presence of step- and half-siblings in either the custodial or non-custodial home was not found to be related to the child's adjustment level (see Appendix 25).

A subjective impression obtained in interviews with the children confirmed that with a few possible exceptions,

step-siblings did not in general appear to play a significant role in the children's post-divorce adjustment.

Almost all of the children appeared to react favourably to half-siblings, whether in the custodial or non-custodial home.

6.3 Step-parents

Remarriage of the custodial parent (i.e. presence of step-parent in custodial home) was not found to be related to the child's adjustment level (Table 5:19). Similarly, the presence of a step-parent in the non-custodial home was not found to be related to the child's adjustment (see Appendix 25).

From what the children said during the interviews, it was clear that no "typical" reaction to step-parents emerged:

"I hate my father's wife; I'd actually like to kill her."
(Female, 23, age 15 at divorce, father custody.)

"When my mother first married we were upset - we were afraid he'd take my mother away from us and we wanted to separate them. Now we all get on very well."
(Girl, 16, age 7 at divorce, mother custody.)

"Liz (i.e. step-mother) is a fantastic person; she's helped my relationship with my father very much; without her I'd have difficulty in communicating with my father."
(Male, 26, age 14 at divorce, mother custody.)

"I was initially upset at my father's second marriage. Now I regard Joan completely as my mother; after one year I adjusted to her as if she was my mother; I called her 'Mom' of my own accord. I feel far closer to her than to my own mother."
(Male, 21, father custody, age 12 at divorce.)

"I'm not close to my step-mother - I didn't want to be close to her - not the sort of person she is."
(Girl, 13, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

A total of 13 children (see Table 5:23) stated that they had experienced difficulty in adjusting to step-parents.

5.6.4 Home constellation

5.6.4.1 Working parents¹

Table 5:36 Analysis of Parent's Employment

	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Employed in Full-Time Capacity	26	19	45
Self-employed, with Flexible Hours	2	2	4
Not Employed	1	1	2
Total	29	22	51

Table 5:36 reveals that an extremely high proportion of mothers in the sample were employed in a full-time capacity (see 6.2.6).

5.6.4.2 Parents employing domestic servants

Table 5:37 Number of Fathers and Mothers Employing Servants

	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Servants	6	7	13
No Servants	23	15	38
Total	29	22	51

¹ Parents were rated according to the situation pertaining during the time that they were actively engaged in child-rearing.

Table 5:37 suggests that custodial fathers did not rely on servants significantly more than did custodial mothers, to assist in the tasks of child-rearing.

Table 5:38 Selected Aspects of Home Constellation in Relation to Sex of Custodial Parent

	Mothers	Fathers	Total
Grandmother Living in Home	3	3	6
Child sent to Boarding School	3	3	6

6.4.3 Presence of extended family

In only six families were grandmothers present in the home to assist parents with child-rearing.

6.4.4 Boarding school

Six custodial parents sent children to boarding school.

7 SOCIO-ECONOMIC VARIABLES

Neither move to a new home, nor change in financial circumstances were found to be significantly related to the children's adjustment (see Table 5:19). There was, however, a suggestive trend linking better adjustment with remaining in the same home, and maintaining a similar standard of living (see Appendix 32, p/o 16 & 19).

Table 5:23 reveals that 14% of the sample stated that they were, or had been, anxious about money. Of this group of 13 children, 12 had been awarded to their mother's custody.

5.8 ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES OF PROJECTIVE TEST MATERIAL

5.8.1 Incomplete Sentences Blank (ISB)

A few stems and their responses will be presented for each example discussed. Full protocols will be found in Appendix 37. The stems as presented to S are underlined. Numbers indicate the order of stems on the test form.

Example 1

Subject No. 24: 15 year old male, mother custody, virtually abandoned by father.

In interviews this boy was withdrawn and uncommunicative, evading any discussion of emotion. His TAT protocol was clipped and unproductive. The extent of his underlying aggression was suggested by his HFD (see 5.8.3) but was most clearly illustrated by the ISB, starting with the very first stem presented.

1. I like the German army, firearms and weapons.
3. I want to know if President Nixon was not kicked out of office because he did not like Jews.
4. I regret that I did not buy the Mauser from Finn for R65.

10. The future is that I want to work in Egypt.

14. I hate most Jews and Israel.

Example 2

Subject No. 65: 14 year old girl, father custody, restricted from seeing mother; feels imprisoned by an exceedingly strict and harsh father. This girl communicated well and easily during the interviews. The ISB confirmed and lent emphasis to her expressed feelings vis-à-vis her situation.

2. The happiest time is away from home visiting ma or friends.

7. I feel he should be more soft on his punishment and not tell us to do right things which he does wrong.

10. The future holds nothing for me at home.

13. Sometimes I feel like running away from home.

Example 3

Subject No. 90: 15 year old girl, father custody, had recently undergone a religious conversion. ISB, apart from other projective features, reflects extent to which situational determinants affects responses.

1. I like to be with re-born Christians, there (sic) company is tremendous.

2. The happiest time of my times (sic) have been since my conversion - e.g. going to church meetings, etc.

3. I want to know more about Jesus and his Word.

4. I regret not having thought about this before now.

7. I feel great, on top of the world since I accept Christ into my life - changed person.

Example 4

Subject from Pilot Group*: 12 year old boy living with father. At the time of the divorce custody was awarded to mother, but reverted to father on mother's remarriage. ISB reveals extent of his acute unhappiness and need to be with his mother.

3. I want to know why I can't stay with my Mom at the moment.
4. At home in Rondebosch I feel very homesick.
5. I regret coming home from enjoyable weekends.
15. I can't express myself how much I would like to stay with my mother.
19. Other people are not always as they should be, e.g. step-mother.
20. I suffer from homesickness.
35. I wish I could stay with my mom.
39. My greatest worry is losing something at my dad's house. (His underlining).

Example 5

Subject No. 69: 9 year old girl, father custody. Projective tests illustrate extent to which she perceives the divorce as on-going, with a conscious wish for her parents to reconcile.

2. The happiest time I had was when my father and mother were together.
4. I regret my family was together and could have a happy time.
17. I wish my mother and father would come together again.
19. My greatest worry is about my father and mother.

* As this was a pilot group subject, sentences extend beyond the 20 stems selected for the main study.

5.8.2 TAT

(For full protocols, see Appendix 38).

Example 1

Subject No. 90 (see ISB example 3 above): TAT illustrates the effect of situational determinants; difficulty with regard to sex-role identification.

Card 1: A little downhearted boy; he hasn't learnt to play this instrument. He's staring, wishing he could play it. Looks very unhappy. If he has enough faith, he'll learn to play it; where there's a will, there's a way.

Card 3: He's committed suicide. He shot himself and dropped the gun. He was very unhappy, resulting from divorce. Or, she broke up with her husband, found life too much. She's probably Jewish, because Christians wouldn't commit suicide, its a sin.

Card 10: Loving kindness. Husband and wife.

Example 2

Subject No. 76: 24 year old man, father custody. TAT reflects bitterness, problems with regard to masculine identification, tendency toward over-intellectualisation, with marked difficulties in interpersonal relationships.

Card 2: Looks biblical. Woman on right is contemplating the bloke* work. Content to let others work. The other woman is an academic type, disdainful of agricultural activity. She's getting down to studying, reading ...

* Equivalent to "guy".

academic pursuit as opposed to harvesting. They are part of a family. They're only tied together by blood, but apart from that, have nothing in common.

Card 6: Bereavement. A recently widowed lady; her son. They're poles apart. She's from a simple background. He's been to college and had a good education. He's come back to attend his father's funeral. There's a large gap between them - they can't communicate. They're both very perturbed about this, but can't do anything about it.

Card 7: Mother or aunt is trying to read to child who's not interested. It seems a good home, reasonable amount of money - upper middle class. She's bored, wants to play with her doll. Mother - or aunt - is doing it out of duty; she'd be more interested in something else. They're both involved in duty - that's the only common denominator.

Example 3

Subject No. 36: 19 year old girl, mother custody. Marked denial, unresolved conflicts and difficulty with regard to sex role functioning.

Card 7: (cf. example 2). A beautiful picture. Mother and daughter. Mother has a book in her hand - counselling her daughter. Girl has a baby in her arms. Mother is telling her the facts of life and she's not paying attention. A serene picture.

Card 10: Tender embrace between man and woman. A moving picture. A tender moving picture - beautiful ... husband and wife.

Example 4

Subject 91: 15 year old boy, father custody. Divorce and post-divorce parental relationship extremely turbulent; boy restricted from seeing as much as he'd like of mother; has been in psychiatric hospital. Underlying aggression.

Card 8: Boy is thinking that he hopes someone gets killed. He's had an argument with someone and wants him to be killed. (E: "What happens in the end?") He is killed.

Example 5

Subject No. 69: (see ISB, example 5). TAT clearly reveals feelings of abandonment.

Card 2: A girl is going to college. She's thinking about her future - she's very sad because her mother and father died, and she gets treated badly.

Card 3: A little boy is sitting near his bed crying because he has no mother and father. He's an orphan. He's asking God to help him.

Card 8: This is terrible - 2 men kidnapped one man, and this is his son. They're going to kill him and his son is very sad because he has no mother, so he'll be an orphan.

5.8.3 Human Figure Drawing

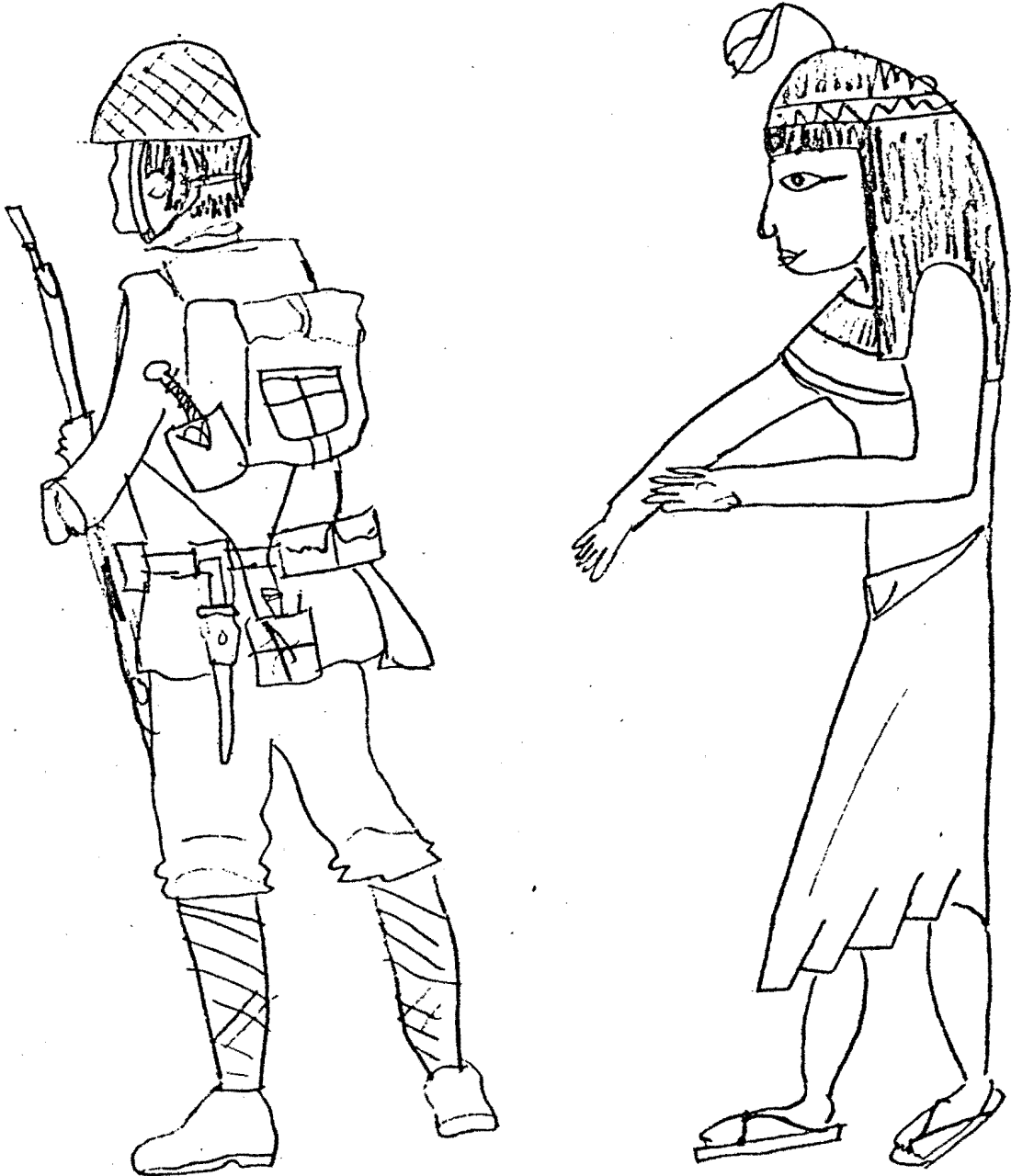
Example 1. Subject No. 1: 14 year old boy, mother custody. Drawings reflect sex-role identity problem. Passive aggressive features. Note inability to draw female figure.

Figure 5:2



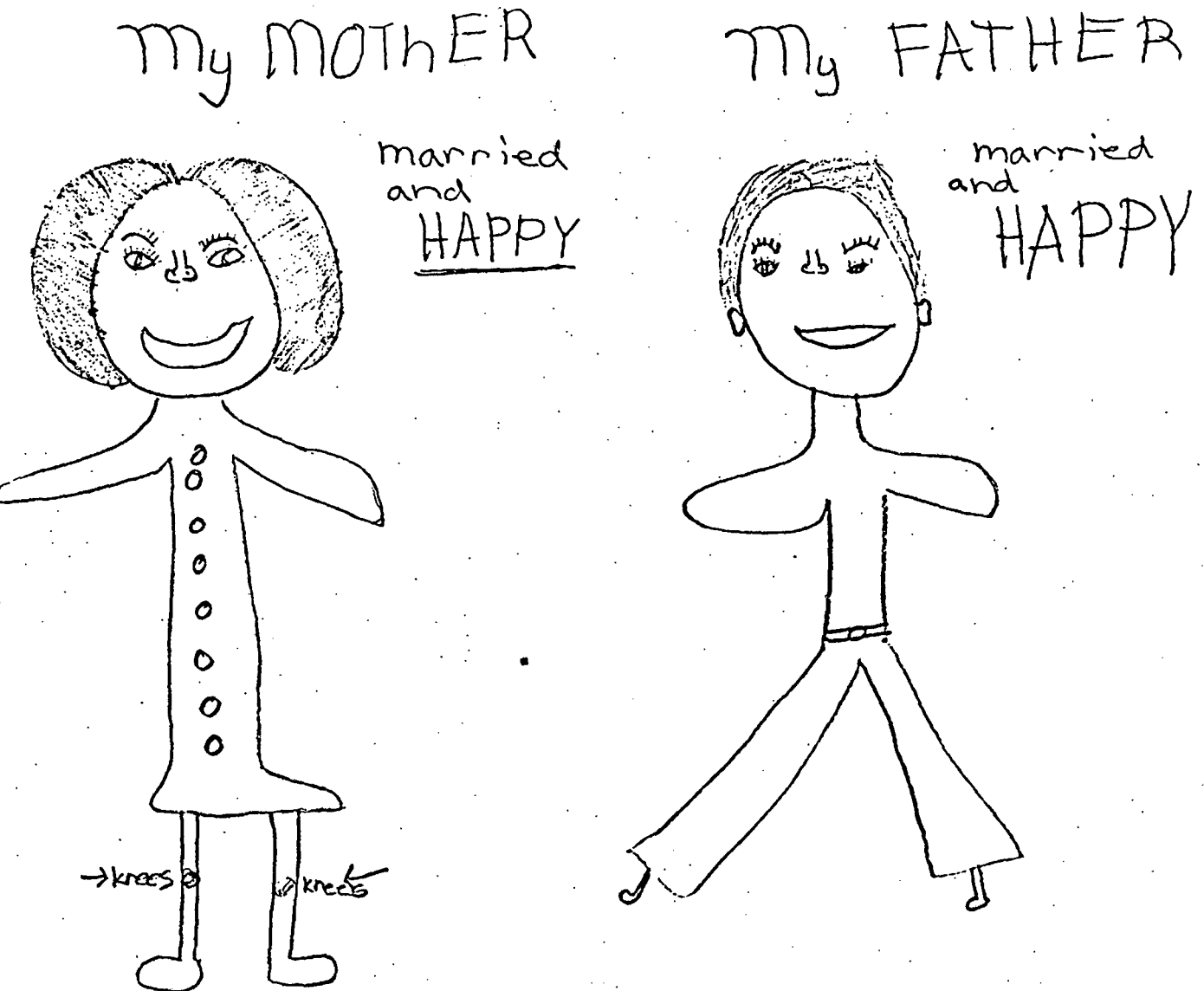
Example 2. Subject No. 24: (see ISB example No. 1).
Confirmation of serious degree of aggression, and denial
of female sexuality.

Figure 5:3



Example 3. Subject No. 69 (see ISB and TAT, example 5):
 Drawings reflect strong need for parents to re-unite.
 Provides an example of child for whom the divorce is
 still an on-going process (see 6.1.2.3 (ii b)).

Figure 5:4



DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Critical evaluation of methodology
- 6.2 Discussion of findings
- 6.3 Core issues

6.1 CRITICAL EVALUATION OF METHODOLOGY

This part of the discussion will focus on the methodological problems which had to be met in obtaining data for this investigation.

6.1.1 Tracing procedure

Tracing of cases was one of the most difficult methodological problems posed by this study. It is considered important to discuss this in some detail.

6.1.1.1 Difficulty in locating subjects

It was noted in 4.3.3 that in order to trace the great majority of divorcees a system of quasi-detective work had to be embarked upon.

Fathers were less difficult to trace than were mothers, for the former had not changed their names, even though they had for the most part moved from the addresses recorded in the court records. Thus, when attempting to locate a father, it was relatively easy to find his name in the directory, becoming more difficult the more common the name and hence the more entries. It was

frequently necessary to telephone all similar names (i.e. where initials were the same) in order, by a process of elimination, to locate the correct person. On many occasions as many as 25 telephone calls were necessary in order to trace one person.

Tracing mothers was far more difficult, for many of them had remarried, resulting in a change of surname. More often than not it became necessary to trace the mother by contacting her ex-husband, or his parents, procedures which frequently gave rise to aggression ("do you expect me to tell you anything about that b....?"; non co-operation (I'm sorry, I can't help you"); suspicion ("what do you ^{want} her for?"); and, at the least, displeasure (discerned from general tone of voice). On many occasions the new spouse would answer the telephone and would not always take kindly to being asked for information regarding her predecessor.

An embarrassing and difficult situation occurred on the occasions where although the telephone listing was in the name of the ex-husband, the telephone itself was in use by the sought-after custodial mother. Thus, for example, when telephoning a Mr. Brown in order to ascertain the whereabouts of the ex-Mrs. Brown, putting the question to the assumed (by the writer) new Mrs. Brown answering the telephone, to be told that it was the sought-after lady on the other end of the telephone, caused considerable difficulties for both writer and the recipient of the telephone call. This led on occasion to a deliberate "white lie" or "cover" story, such as "are you the Mrs. Brown who entered for a Win-a-Car competition?", or "did you advertise white rabbits for sale?" The rationale for this device was that it had been decided at the outset, for reasons of standardization, not to confront parents telephonically with the nature of the research, but to notify them later by letter. This posed an ethical issue for the writer (see 6.1.1.3).

Apart from hazards of the type outlined above, further difficulties were encountered in the way of changes in the telephone directory, new numbers having been allocated to certain residential areas, or because of a delay in the publishing of the new telephone directory, necessitating a call to the central telephone exchange in order to ascertain the party's new telephone number. Many of the listed telephone numbers were found to be out of order or discontinued. In countless instances, the number was continually busy, or there was no reply. Even when perfectly matching names were located, this was not always a guarantee of having found the correct person: it was found later in response to the introductory letter, that two flabbergasted people reported that they had never been divorced!

1.1.2 Emotional effect on researcher

The difficulty in tracing, and in particular the situations where it was necessary to contact the ex-spouse and family in order to locate a parent, was an extremely trying emotional experience. As a result of the very real emotional strain incurred in this way, tracing sessions were limited to a total of approximately two hours daily. In this connection, it is relevant to mention that an assistant, selected partly on the basis of stability and even-temperament, was engaged for the specific purpose of helping with tracing. Although enthusiastic at the commencement, after a short while this gave way to reports of tension so severe, including palpitations, that she withdrew from the assignment! Having experienced tracing as fairly traumatic, the writer was greatly encouraged to read about Goode's (1956) experiences. Goode, in discussing his attempts to locate subjects, including the reactions of fear and suspicion to which his telephone calls gave rise on the part of the recipient, stated: "Although the reader may feel that the excitement and tension aroused by such a

technique is too great for the researcher to undergo, the goal was to obtain our respondents for interviewing" (p.344).

6.1.1.3 Ethical issues in tracing

As described in 6.1.1.1, it was in certain instances necessary to resort to a certain measure of subterfuge in order to withhold from the recipient of the telephone call the true reason for the call. Apart from these extreme examples, throughout the tracing period the writer was conscious of the ethical issue involved in contacting people telephonically in order to ascertain their address and their identity, and yet failing to reveal to them the reason for requiring this information. Once again, it was gratifying to find that Goode had faced a very similar methodological problem in obtaining his divorcées. Goode referred to "the almost insoluble problem" in relation to locating a sample. He discussed how, on telephoning prospective respondents "a false explanation of the purpose of the call was given" (p.343). Whilst acknowledging the ethical problems that this raises, he considered that to ask permission of the person would have destroyed the validity of the sample. This reflects the point of view of this writer. It was considered important to standardise the research procedure by making the introductory letter (Appendix 5) the first intimation of the nature of the research. Thus with this goal uppermost in mind, the decision was made to reveal nothing over the telephone, the goal of obtaining as "pure" a sample as possible justifying the techniques used.

6.1.1.4 Observations regarding divorced population

During the process of selecting cases meeting the criteria for this study, and of tracing, certain interesting observations or features regarding the divorced population became apparent.

(i) Rate of moving home

An impression gained during the course of tracing was that divorcees move home at a remarkable rate. Even after people were "traced" it was found that between the time of tracing and actually attempting to contact them, several divorcees had moved once again. This applied to men and women alike. A total of eleven parents (eight mothers and three fathers), had moved by the time letters were sent to them, i.e. in the 12 months since tracing had commenced.

The significance of this is not clear. Does it suggest that the group lacks stability? Is the rate of moving among divorced people in fact more marked than in the general population? Is it perhaps an index of economic difficulties and the unsettled political climate at the time that the field-work of this investigation took place?

Goode (1956) also queried whether divorcees moved around at a rate faster than that of the general population. "We do not know at the present time just how much greater it is in the case of divorced people than in the case of others" (1956, p.344).

Details are not available for the rate of moving of all the divorcees whose names appeared in the Supreme Court records, neither is the writer aware of data relative to the rate of moving among married couples or single people. It has already been mentioned (4.3.3) that of the total of 1 060 cases meeting the criteria for inclusion in the

study, only 69 were still living at the same address as at the time of the divorce some six to eight years earlier.

(ii) Divided custody

In 50 of the original families meeting the criteria for selection, it was seen from the Consent Paper that siblings had been divided between the parents at the time of the divorce. It is of interest to note that of seven such families who were contacted, the children in five instances had, by the time of the investigation, all been re-established with one parent*; in only two instances were they still divided. The reasons for this could not always be ascertained, as not all of them agreed to participate. In those three cases where the parents did participate, it is interesting to consider the reasons for (a) the original division of siblings and (b) the change in custody arrangements:

Case 1: At the time of the divorce the two older girls were awarded to their father's custody; the boy, however, was then only 2 years old, and was consequently awarded to his mother on the basis of the tender age presumption. When the boy was 8 years of age he insisted on returning to live with his father and sisters. Following two years of litigation, the original custody order was modified.

Cases 2 and 3: As the dynamics of both these families were very similar, they can be discussed together. In both instances, one child in the family was awarded to the mother (one on the basis of sex, and the other on the basis of age) at the time of the divorce. Shortly after the divorce, the mother proved to be an unsuitable custodian and custody consequently reverted to the father.

* In four of the five cases the father had ultimately regained custody of all siblings.

The implication of the above examples is that it appears to be doubtful whether divided custody would be successful if the children are divided merely on the basis of sex and/or tender age (see also 6.2.5.3).

(iii) Other

It was evident on perusal of the divorce files that a surprisingly large number of mothers (178 out of the 1 060 names noted) were pregnant, or had a very young infant at the time of the divorce. This figure is not to be regarded as absolute, as the child's age was not always apparent from the files.

It was also noticed that many of the divorces involved adopted children. As indicated in 4.2.1.2, these were not included in the sample.

No attempt will be made to explain or comment on the above two observations. They have merely been included for general interest.

6.1.2 Appraisal of sample

The sample may be described as "non-clinical" and "non-contested". Apart from difficulties encountered in the tracing process (see 6.1.1) it was a randomly selected sample (see also 6.1.3.2).

6.1.2.1 Non-contested

This is self-evident. The sample was not selected on the basis of contested custody although it later emerged that nine of the children had in fact come from a "contested" background.

6.1.2.2 Non-clinical

The sample was not selected on the basis of parents seeking psychological help. During the course of the investigation, however, it was established that a total of 15 children (11 in mother's custody and 4 in father's custody) had in fact been referred for psychological investigation.

6.1.2.3 Age range of sample

(i) Factors determining age range

One of the criteria for selection (see 4.2.1.2) was that children should be 16 years and below at the time of the divorce. The fieldwork took place during 1975 and 1976. As the sample was drawn from divorces that had taken place between 1965 and 1970, this provided a possible age-range of 5 to 26 years. In actual fact, however, age-range extended from 9 to 28 years, for the following reasons:

Subjects older than 26: this occurred where the

break-up of the family had occurred earlier than the legal divorce (see 1.7 (iii)).

The fact that there were no subjects under 9 years of age was a result of three factors:

(a) Analysis of reasons for refusal to participate suggested that parents who divorced when their children were still infants were particularly reluctant to "open old wounds" for the children, who were for the most part reported to have adjusted to, or accepted the situation. Included here were situations where the parents had remarried and the children had come to accept the step-parent as their own parent, or where they had been legally adopted by the step-parent.

(b) It happened in several instances (as was revealed during the interviews) that between the original date of the hearing and the final decree of divorce, there had been considerable delays caused by trial reconciliations, or protracted litigation. This meant that the actual divorce took place later than originally thought, sometimes by as much as one or two years.

(c) As a result of the pilot study, it was judged that children under 9 years of age would not easily be able to cope with the Incomplete Sentences Blanks. Furthermore, it was anticipated that even the direct interview might be of doubtful value with this age group, for very young children often have difficulty in verbalising their emotions, especially to a stranger. Another consideration was the possibility that Interview II (see 4.5.2.3) might be traumatic for very young children.

(ii) Difficulties raised as a result of age range

Even without children of under 9 years, the extremely wide age range of the sample caused considerable methodological difficulties:

(a) In rating the variables selected as a measure of adjustment, it was not always easy to apply the same criteria for 9 and 10 year old children, that one would use for adolescents or young adults. In particular, it was not considered feasible to rate sex-role functioning in children of under 16 years, although this was regarded as an important variable in the adjustment of older subjects.

(b) As the study progressed, a more serious difficulty became apparent. The inclusion of younger children meant a departure from one of the basic methodological aims of the study, namely, a retrospective approach to the experience of divorce. Some of the younger children were still very much part of an ongoing divorce situation, and thus could not always be expected to render a retrospective account of their feelings and reactions (e.g. see Appendix 37, Protocol 4). In effect, therefore, the study was made up of two "children of divorce" populations, one in which the divorce was still an ongoing process, and one in which it could be perceived retrospectively. This is considered a major methodological criticism.

(c) In some instances the 9 and 10 year old children were found to lack verbal communication skills with which to express their feelings. Furthermore, many of them had not yet attained sufficient maturity to be able to perceive the present investigation in its proper context, namely, as designed to help children of divorce in the future. They consequently tended to regard the interviews as "prying". In

contrast, most of the older children had read the introductory letter, and the possibility of helping others in the same situation was an important factor in their willingness to co-operate. The sample was thus heterogeneous from the point of view of level and kind of motivation.

With the knowledge of hindsight, it would have been preferable to investigate a more homogeneous sample.

6.1.2.4 Size of sample

Another criticism of the study arises in connection with the size of the sample. In spite of the fact that a sample of 92 subjects is not regarded as small, so many variables entered into the analysis that in some instances "cells" contained only four or five members. For example, the first major division of the sample was in terms of sex of the custodial parent; if the sample was then divided in terms of sex of the child, and again on the basis of age at time of the divorce, it can be seen that the number of children in each category is by no means large. This posed a major problem in the statistical analysis, as a result of which it was not possible to analyze some of the variables, such as "only" children, or those children who had had no contact with the non-custodial parent from early childhood.

6.1.3 Method of selection and bias

The writer was well aware of the possibility of bias in the sample, as a result of sampling techniques. The sample has been described in 4.2.1. Participation was, to a certain extent, determined by such factors as difficulty in locating subjects, and refusals to participate. It has been suggested (Solnit, 1976; Rutter, 1976) that these factors may introduce bias into the findings. It is thus extremely important to consider the group of people who were not seen in the investigation.

6.1.3.1 People not seen

Three groups will be considered: those people who could not be traced, those who refused to participate, and those who were traced but not contacted.

(i) Cases not traced

Rutter (1976) has pointed out the possibility that those people who were not traced may be more disturbed (i.e. interpreting their apparent "disappearance" as a possible sign of greater maladjustment) and consequently that if one were to examine the children of these people, one might conceivably find more disturbances as well as possible differences in custody and access patterns.

With the limited resources of time and finance available, it was not possible to trace all divorcees whose names were taken from the Supreme Court records. Those who could not be traced by means of the local telephone directory were thus considered "lost". It is acknowledged that this might be a possible source of bias. The only way in which to test this would be to embark on a new study, equipped with resources (specifically a team of tracing agents) for tracing all divorcees, and comparing the two sets of findings. It is important, however, to

ask why people could not be traced. It should be noted that in many instances the reason might stem from relatively simple factors, such as the person going to live in another town, or not having a telephone.* As part of the standardised tracing procedure (see 6.1.1) involved use of the telephone, the latter group was automatically excluded. It is thus considered that one would not be justified in concluding that failure to trace a person, at least within the framework of this design, inevitably means that the said person is more "disturbed" or any different in essence from those who were traced.

(ii) Refusals to participate

The fact that the sample consisted of people who agreed to participate is regarded as a more likely source of bias than (i) above. The implication might be that the more disturbed the person, the less likelihood of participation. It is thus very important to examine the reasons why people refused to participate.

It was stated in 4.2.3 that where people refused to participate, an attempt was made to elicit the reasons for such refusal. If one can accept at face value the reasons given, analysis of acceptances and refusals to participate (see Appendix 6) revealed that in both groups, both extremes were to be found: some people refused on the basis that they were loath to reawaken traumatic experiences, while others saw this as an opportunity to work through, and possibly be helped with, divorce-related problems. Similarly, some people agreed to participate on the basis that the divorce had been untraumatic and they consequently didn't mind discussing it, while others gave as their

* For numerous technical reasons it is not always possible to secure a telephone in South Africa.

reason for not co-operating the very fact that because they had no serious problems, they were afraid to risk "upsetting the apple cart". Reluctance to disturb the status quo for children who had made a good adjustment following the divorce was the most common reason given by parents for refusal to participate (N = 14). It is possible that those ten parents who expressed resentment of intrusion into their private lives may have been a more disturbed group, but there is no way of establishing this. In view of this analysis, it seems that there is no real justification for assuming that refusal to participate automatically implies a greater level of disturbance: people appeared to be both willing or reluctant to participate as a result of problems currently experienced.

(iii) Traced but uncontacted group

This group consisted of those people who, although traced, were not seen because a sufficient number of divorcees had already been obtained (see 4.3.3). It is submitted here that although one should be aware of the existence of this group, there is no basis for assuming that the traced but uncontacted people would be different from the sample in this study.

Goode (1956) also acknowledged the need to consider the above three groups. He concluded, however, that people not interviewed for the above reasons did not differ significantly from the particular population sample interviewed.

6.1.3.2 Departure from strictly random sampling

In discussing sampling techniques, it should be stated that in order to obtain the sample of 22 custodial fathers (41 children) and 29 custodial mothers (51 children), it was necessary to depart from a strictly random sampling approach. The latter would have yielded a disproportionately high ratio of custodial mothers to fathers for the purpose of the present study, the aim of which was to compare the two groups. Thus when sending letters to the traced cases, it was at times necessary to "pull out" fathers in order to secure an approximately equal number of parents of both sexes. (For custodial pattern in cases meeting criteria for selection, see 6.2.1.1 (ii)).

6.1.3.3 Economic status of sample

It has been stated (see 4.2.1.1) that the majority of the sample could be described as "middle class". This being the case, one would have expected a far smaller proportion of South African mothers in this socio-economic group to be employed on a full-time basis than was in fact found (see Table 5:36, 5.6.4.1). The obvious deduction to be drawn from this is that divorce brings economic stress in its wake, necessitating single mothers taking up employment. The ratio of fathers in full-time employment is commensurate with what one would expect in this socio-economic group.

Goode (1956), in discussing his tracing problems, suggested that a large proportion of the divorced population is in the lower economic stratum. It does follow that the lower the socio-economic class, the more difficult it would be to trace people; the more likely they would be to move around, and the less likely, in fact, even to have a telephone. Thus it is probable that herein lies another possible source of bias. In describing the sample as "middle-class", however, it was intended to make it quite clear that this study has been concerned mainly with one population segment.

6.1.3.4 Decision to see custodial parent only

This decision arose out of two main considerations:

- (i) The focus of investigation was on the examination with the children rather than the parents (see 4.5.1.4), the main aim being to determine how they perceived and reacted to the divorce experience.
- (ii) To have seen the non-custodial parent would have posed almost insurmountable practical problems in terms of locating both parents. It would also, in many instances, have adversely affected the co-operation of the custodial parent, who frequently inquired whether or not the "other" parent would be seen, before agreeing to co-operate.

It is however, acknowledged that seeing both parents would undoubtedly have enriched the study.

6.1.4 Evaluation of measuring instruments

6.1.4.1 Clinical interview as a research technique

This study was initiated primarily as a clinical investigation. From the outset, the emphasis was on how the children themselves perceived their situation. Thus the clinical interview was considered to be the most important source of data. Considerable emphasis was placed on the skill and ability of the interviewer to elicit the

child's real feelings. In other words, the interview, as employed in this study, embraced a clinical assessment of the child, and was not merely a factual affair.

Researchers have disagreed about the value of the interview as a research tool. Goode (1956) was convinced that good interviewing is capable of eliciting the truth and is as such highly effective (see 3.4.2). This faith in the interview is shared by Brown and Rutter (1966) and by Quinton, Rutter and Rowlands (1976) who consider that interviews are capable of providing reliable and valid measures of many aspects of family life, and in a richer and more detailed manner than are questionnaires. Anthony (1975a), on the other hand, has described the interview, if used on its own, as "useless" in obtaining a true picture, his contention being that it does not make allowances for retrospective falsification. He advocates a combination of interview and projective tests as the best way of obtaining information.

6.1.4.2 Reasons for selecting tests in addition to the interview

As a result of disagreement between researchers regarding the efficacy of the interview as a research tool, it was decided after lengthy deliberation, to administer the Incomplete Sentences Blank (ISB) and Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) in addition to the interview. In so doing, however, it should be stressed that the interview was nonetheless considered the main psychodiagnostic tool and that the projective tests were considered as adjuncts to the interview, rather than independently reliable and valid "tests" or measuring instruments. This is in accordance with Rutter's (1976) scepticism about the use of projective techniques as instruments with which to measure adjustment. (Rutter advocates the use of rating scales. The possibility of using these was considered for the present study, but was not pursued owing to the

wide age-range of the sample (see 6.1.2.3) which made it unrealistic for use with either teachers or with the children themselves).

The ISB and TAT were administered with the purpose of eliciting information regarding the child's general adjustment, and not in order to elicit divorce-related material. The latter was obtained in Interview II (see 4.5.2.3). It was anticipated that inclusion of two such different projective techniques as the ISB and TAT would enrich the study.

6.1.4.3 Evaluation of ISB as used in study

(i) Advantages

The wealth of information revealed by the ISB about the child: his adjustment, views on life, and general emotional state, was regarded as so valuable as to not only confirm the choice of this technique for the present research, but also to strongly recommend its use in further research. It happened in several instances that a subject who was reticent about "giving" in the interview (i.e. in a face-to-face situation) was more able to communicate his feelings in the ISB, knowing that these would be read only after the examination had ended. Many children asked "Can I really say exactly what I feel?" or "will it be 100% confidential?", and set about completing the stems with considerable zest (see examples 5.8.1; Appendix 37; see also 4.5.2.4 (i)).

(ii) Pitfalls and Problems

The fact that the sample included children of 9 years of age created a problem in administration. A few of the 9-year old children had not yet mastered the skills of writing and expressing themselves in writing adequately

enough for meaningful completion of the stems. In one such case stems were completed orally and taken down verbatim by the examiner. This contingency had not been revealed in the pilot study.

In one instance, stems were completed orally as the subject (adult) was dyslexic.

Four subjects "blocked" and were unable to complete any of the stems. It was naturally not possible to rate their sentences; the adjustment score was thus based only on the interview. However, where "blocking" occurred in relation to specific stems only, this was regarded as significant, and omissions were accordingly rated. Stems did not always succeed in eliciting themes relating to social relationships and occupational adjustment. In part this defect stemmed from the wide age range of the sample, which made it unrealistic to include, for example, "At school ..." for adults, or "My job ..." for children. With the knowledge of hindsight, it might have been possible to select better stems.

A criticism that can be levelled against this technique is that responses could be affected by situational determinants. Thus, if something in particular was happening in a child's life, such as going into the army, an argument with a parent, friend or spouse, or some external event such as riots or political upheaval, there was a strong possibility that the emotional reaction to this would be expressed in the sentences. It was, however, relatively easy to detect when this was so; at times the children themselves pointed it out, explaining that the mood of the sentences was depressed or elated as a result of a specific set of factors. This would be taken into account in rating the sentences.

(iii) Summary

In spite of some difficulties with regard to administration and scoring, it was considered that the ISB yielded interesting and illuminating results, suggesting its further use in this type of investigation.

6.1.4.4 Evaluation of TAT as used in study

(i) Decision to exclude from measure of adjustment

After obtaining ratings on the interview, ISB and TAT, it was found that although the first two were very closely related and were clearly measuring the same thing, the TAT ratings were not altogether compatible either with the interview or the ISB. After careful consideration of this apparent anomaly, the following postulation was suggested: The ISB is essentially a structured technique, which, like the interview, provides a measure of ego (reality) functioning; in contrast to these two techniques, the TAT provides a measure of unconscious conflicts and dynamics. As opposed to the clinical assessment obtained from the interview and ISB, the TAT yielded an intrapsychic personality assessment. Thus, to attempt to quantify unconscious material and correlate it with conscious ego material was clearly bound to yield non-identical results.

In view of this line of reasoning, a decision was made not to include TAT ratings in the adjustment score and rather to consider individual TAT protocols in relation to the clinical picture as a whole (see 5.8.2). The decision to exclude TAT ratings was confirmed by Kleinmuntz's (1967) contention that where global or content-orientated approaches to TAT protocol analyses are made, interscorer reliability indexes are discouragingly low. Kleinmuntz goes on to say that "... the overwhelming majority of these studies with the TAT have generally led to discouraging results" (p.315).

(ii) TAT Conflict score

This score was found to correspond very closely to the clinical assessment of the child, as well as to the statistically determined adjustment score (see Appendix 36). The expectation set out in 4.5.2.4 (iia) was thus confirmed. This analysis was considered in terms of how it enriched the study qualitatively (see TAT examples, 5.8.2).

(iii) Summary

Although not included in the final measure of adjustment, analysis of individual TAT protocols yielded interesting material which undoubtedly enriched the clinical picture. The criticism concerning situational determinants, discussed in relation to the ISB (see 6.1.6.3 (ii)), applies equally to the TAT.

6.1.4.5 Evaluation of Human Figure Drawing (HFD) as used in study

(i) Why administered to only 36 children?

The negative reaction this technique evoked from the subjects resulted in its being withdrawn after only 36 cases. Apart from the younger subjects (\pm 13 and below) and those with a special talent for drawing, most people expressed a strong negative reaction to the HFD. They stated that: they lacked artistic ability; they felt "embarrassed", it made them feel awkward, and they "just didn't know what to do" or how to draw a person. This is in accordance with the writer's previous experience of using the HFD with older subjects.

(ii) Summary

Although some of the drawings contained interesting projective features (see 5.8.3), on the whole this technique was not found to be particularly valuable in the study.

6.1.5 Reliability and independence of scores and ratings

It was mentioned in 5.1 that all ratings were carried out by the investigator. In spite of the fact that an attempt was made to compensate for this by regarding 0,01 instead of 0,05 as the level of significance, the absence of independent confirmation of ratings is acknowledged as a weakness of the design. One of the problems that could conceivably result from this might be a tendency to arrive at ratings in accordance with preconceived hypotheses. This possibility was recognised and an attempt was made to ensure that this did not occur. It was also hoped that the hypothesis-generating nature of the study would reduce the chances of the above danger; the study did not start with strong preconceived expectations of relationships between variables.

Furthermore, it is acknowledged that in research of this nature, it would have been preferable, in order to ensure greater objectivity, for an independent rater to have scored the projective material.

It is also important to record that ratings were carried out in the full knowledge of a possibility that certain of the variables (e.g. parent's adjustment and interparental turbulence; child's assessment of divorce-related problems, and problems experienced in relation to access; turbulence and parent's perception of child's problems), might not be mutually independent. As far as possible, therefore, an attempt was made to ensure that inter-rating contamination did not occur.

6.1.6 Scope of study

There is an important caveat to bear in mind in examining the findings. This study was primarily concerned with investigating the effects of custody and access. It did not set out to investigate in general the effects of

divorce upon children, although it was inevitable that it would impinge upon this broader area. It did not fall within the scope of this study to carry out a detailed investigation of all variables regarded as important. In particular, the following areas were considered to be insufficiently explored:

(i) Parent-child bond

The measure of parent-child bond in this investigation (see 4.6.4.1) is regarded as somewhat inadequate, particularly in view of the fact that bonding was one of the theoretical frameworks upon which the study was based. An in-depth investigation of this variable, with particular attention to the relationship between bonding (with custodial, non-custodial, and in certain cases with step-parents (see (ii) below)) and post-divorce adjustment is strongly recommended as an area for further empirical research (see 7.2).

(ii) Importance of step-parents

The whole area of remarriage of parents and the role of step-parents in both the custodial and non-custodial home was only superficially examined. The child's bond with the step-parent in the custodial home was not included in rating parent-child bond. It is acknowledged that the child's relationship with a step-parent (either positive or negative) could be of considerable significance in influencing adjustment. At least two (unrelated) children in the sample, both in father's custody, reported that they had established an extremely close bond with their step-mother, a relationship that had been more meaningful to them than that with their father or with their own mother; in contrast, two others, also in their father's custody, and also unrelated, reported a relationship with their step-mother that was so extremely negative as to actively interfere with the previously close father-child bond.

(iii) Maintenance

The issue of maintenance has remained unexplored in this thesis. It is acknowledged that in many instances maintenance may be of direct significance in the access arrangements (see 3.4.2 (ii)); in fact, it can also influence the custody arrangements, for it does happen that certain parents conceive of custody as a way of not having to pay support (Rosen & Abramovitz, 1975). Continuing hostility between parents is likely to be one of the reasons for support payments not being made, apart from the financial status of the father. It is easily conceivable that withholding of maintenance may be used by the father as a lever in the interparental feuding.

The fact that the present investigation does not specifically consider maintenance is not an indication of a lack of awareness of its importance.

6.2

GENERAL OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION OF FINDINGS

In this section the main findings arising out of the study will be discussed and evaluated in terms of what is known from the literature. To what extent have the findings contributed towards increased knowledge in the field investigated? To what extent have they paved the way for further research? To what extent have they confirmed what has previously been suggested?

Certain topics considered to warrant special attention will be discussed in 6.3, entitled "Core Issues". In order to avoid repetition, core issues will not be discussed here.

6.2.1 Divorce variables

6.2.1.1 Custodial pattern

(i) Sex of custodial parent in relation to child's adjustment

Sex of the custodial parent was not found to be of significance in the adjustment of children. As this is considered a finding of major importance, discussion will be taken up in 6.3.1.1 as a core issue.

(ii) Is the award of custody to father on the increase?

In the present study, of the original 1 060 names taken from the Supreme Court files (see 4.3.2), custody had been awarded to the father in 261 cases, to the mother in 749 cases, and in the remaining 50 cases, siblings had been divided between the parents. Converting these figures (excluding the 50 cases of divided custody) to percentages, based on the 1972 figure of 1,4 children per white South African family (Report on Marriages and Divorces, 1972), one would arrive at the following deduction: father custody = 25,8%, mother custody = 74,2%. It is of interest to compare this to Palmer's (1976) study (see 3.4.3.2), where out of 566 children, 17% were awarded to fathers and 63,8% to mothers. In contrast to both the present study and that of Palmer, Goode's (1956) study (see 3.4.2) revealed that 2,4% of the children had been awarded to their father's custody; mothers were awarded custody in 94,8% of cases and "other" arrangements were made in 2,8%. Do these figures suggest a trend toward an increase in father custody over the past 20 years?

Mendes (1976) states that the number of children being reared by single fathers in the US has increased by 100%

between 1960 and 1970. (This includes situations other than divorce, such as widowers and single adoptive fathers). According to Levine (1976) there are no accurate national statistics in the US regarding the number of men awarded custody of their children. This is also true of South Africa, where no figures are available for the number of custodial fathers. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1976) cite the latest yearly Population Survey by the US Census Bureau as stating that only 8,4% of children of divorced parents reside with their father.

In relation to available information, therefore, it is not possible to say whether, and if so, to what extent, there has been an increase in the number of fathers to whom custody is awarded. Comparison of the custodial pattern in the present study, and that of Palmer (1976), with Goode's (1956) figures, does possibly indicate a trend in this direction. This, however, requires further examination, particularly as the three studies emanate from three different countries.

(iii) Possible reasons for high proportion of fathers in cases meeting criteria for selection

The reader may find it surprising (as did the writer) that so many custodial fathers were available for participation in this study, particularly in view of the fact that in South Africa it is necessary for the father to prove that he is the more suitable custodian (see 2.1.5). In the review of empirical studies (see 3.4.8), it was repeatedly noted that writers had not mentioned the custody distribution, the automatic assumption being that custody had been awarded to the mother. In Wallerstein and Kelly's (1974, 1975, 1976) sample of 60 families, there was only one custodial father.

It was thus considered important to examine why there appear to be so many custodial fathers in this country.

In so doing, it is important to remind the reader that, as indicated by Despert (1953), Hansen (1966) and Foster (1966) (see 2.5), and confirmed by the present investigation (see 5.2.1, Table 5:5), the great majority of custodial arrangements are made by the parents themselves. Only a small percentage are in fact "awards" made by the court. The emphasis is thus on the parents themselves, and not on the legal system.

(a) Unsuitability of mother

Unsuitable behaviour on the part of the mother (see 5.2.1.8, Table 5:5) accounts for a large proportion of fathers receiving custody. In 50% of the father-custody families investigated, the mother had either abandoned her family, or had been considered unfit to take on the role of custodian. This, however, would not necessarily apply only to this country. Palmer (1976) for example, in attempting to ascertain why so many of the children in her Canadian sample were not in their mother's custody, found this to be associated with the mother's extra-marital relationships. These two sets of findings are corroborative of each other.

(b) Domestic help

The possibility that easy availability of domestic help in this country might induce more fathers to take on the role of single parent was explored. It appears, however (see 5.6.4.2, Table 5:37), that this cannot be put forward as a significant factor.

(c) Lack of previous research

The question presents itself as to whether the apparently high proportion of custodial fathers in this country may simply be explained on the

basis of similar research not having been undertaken elsewhere as yet. In other words, is it not possible that if a researcher systematically worked his way through court records of any other given community, a similar custodial pattern might emerge? Palmer's (1976) findings support this possibility.

(iv) Custodial pattern in relation to sex and age of children

It was seen in 5.2.1 (Tables 5:1 and 5:2) that in practice, factors other than the tender age doctrine and same-sex parent consideration (see 2.1.3) dictate which children are placed with which parents. Palmer (1976) reports a similar finding. As most custody decisions are made by the parents themselves (see (iii) above) it is not surprising to find that the traditional guidelines for helping the court in reaching custody decisions do not apply.

(v) Child's stated preference for custodial parent

For 35% of the sample (see Table 5:7) there was at least some doubt as to whether the custody placement had coincided with the child's preference. In only three instances (see Table 5:6) had the child's preference been sought and acted upon.

No evidence will be presented to suggest that those children whose custodial placement had not coincided with their preference were less well-adjusted than the others. However, the mere fact that more than a third of the sample were not altogether happy about the arrangements, is reason enough to suggest that more attention could and should be paid to the child's stated preference. In 2.1.3 (ii) it was seen that there have been widely divergent opinions among members of the legal profession concerning the importance to be attached to this. Referring to Galligan's

(1973) attitude, it is suggested by this writer that the weight to be attached to the child's stated preference should depend, among other factors, upon how consistently these feelings had been expressed prior to the court action, and not merely upon his reactions under those conditions of stress typical of a custody dispute.

An important factor in this connection is that children might be reluctant to express their true feelings about their preference, especially to the parents themselves, for fear of upsetting the non-preferred parent, and perhaps incurring his/her anger and possible rejection. This is clearly illustrated by a 12 year old member of the sample:

"When my parents went to court over who would have me, I'd have liked to have been given a chance to have my say in court, to tell the judge my feelings. I was too shy to tell my mother, I was afraid of getting a hiding, and afraid to upset her."

This is an area where clinical intervention would be extremely valuable, particularly if the clinician's role were as outlined in 6.3.3.2.

Hahlo (1975a) draws attention to a point raised at a conference by the International Society on Family Law, namely, that when a child has reached the "age of discretion", decisions vitally affecting his life should not be taken without giving "weighty consideration" to his own wishes. Experience gained from this study, as well as from clinical practice, supports this point of view.

(vi) Conditional awarding of custody

Custody awards are sometimes made on a conditional basis: in the event of a particular set of circumstances, custody might revert from one parent to the other. One illustrative example of a conditional custody award emanates from the present study:

Two very young children had been awarded to their mother on the condition that she would not remarry out of her religious faith; as soon as the mother broke this condition, custody reverted to father. The result of this was that the children were exposed to a tremendous upheaval, bringing much heartbreak in its wake. Evidence of the unhappiness of these children, persisting at the time of this investigation several years later, can be seen in their ISB protocols (see Appendix 37; see also 5.8.1).

Another example arises out of the writer's clinical experience: a clause written into the Consent Paper as part of a divorce agreement stated that custody of a child, then aged 4 years, be awarded to the mother on condition that the child complete his schooling in the country town where the family had lived at the time of the separation. As soon as the mother remarried, therefore, this condition effectively interfered with the continuity of the mother-child relationship. The mother, in moving to the city, was legally bound to leave her child with her ex-spouse in the original country town.

Many similar examples are to be found in legal and psychological practices.

It is clear that both the above judgments were made without any consideration whatsoever of the interest of the children concerned, the children in effect being pawns in the legal manoeuvres between the parents and their lawyers.

The writer would agree with Watson (1969) and with Goldstein et al. (1973) that conditional custody awards are potentially detrimental to a child's healthy emotional development. These writers, however, in recommending that all custody decisions should be final and unconditional, allow no scope for the possibility that later modification may in fact become necessary from the child's point of view,

for example, if a parent becomes mentally or physically ill, or in some other way unfit to be custodian.

In view of these contingencies which dictate that a custody award should in fact be left open to the possibility of later modification, how then are the best interests of children to be protected against the sort of conditional arrangements described above?

6.2.1.6 Access pattern

Access pattern receives attention in 6.3.1.2 as a core issue.

6.2.1.3 Interparental turbulence

"The marriage was the trauma,
not the divorce".
(26 year old male member of sample).

Interparental turbulence emerged as the single most significant factor in relation to the adjustment of the children. Children were found to be poorly adjusted where there was a high degree of turbulence surrounding the divorcing couple. Children of turbulent parental relationships experienced significantly more problems in relation to the divorce and access arrangements.

(i) Evaluation of findings in relation to the literature

The finding linking interparental turbulence to poor adjustment in children is not new, but confirms what many writers have postulated. In 3.3.2 it was indicated that since Despert (1953) first spoke about "emotional divorce", an increasing number of theorists and researchers have come to regard the disharmony or turbulence in the parental relationship as more pathogenic for children than the divorce experience itself. In the work of Westman et al.

(1970) and Rutter (1971) was found confirmation of the earlier suggested link between these two sets of variables. It was Westman, in fact, who first used the term "turbulent" in describing conflictual interaction between divorced couples.

Recent empirical studies (Wallerstein & Kelly, 1975; Hetherington et al., 1976) are in agreement that children from families in which turmoil continues after the divorce are those that make the poorest post-divorce adjustment. Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) found that by one year after the divorce symptoms of disturbance had subsided in all but those pre-school children who came from families characterised by undiminished intensity of divorce discord or "turmoil". Furthermore, Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) found that the intensity of sadness in some of their 7 and 8 year old children was in direct proportion to the amount of turmoil generated by the divorce: one year after the divorce, increased feelings of anger were evident in those children where turmoil between the parents had continued. The present study did not include children as young as Wallerstein and Kelly's pre-school and "early latency" groups. However, the strong relationship that emerged between interparental turbulence and poor adjustment in children is very much in keeping with what the above researchers have found.

The finding concerning interparental turbulence is also in keeping with expectations based on theories of family functioning (see 3.1.3). Lidz (1970) and Fleck (1972) have said that when a marriage is characterised by disharmony (turbulence) a satisfactory coalition between parents is not possible, and the child finds himself placed between two hostile spouses. These writers describe as one of the extreme manifestations of unsatisfactory coalition, the mutual denigration of the parents. From the children's description of their divorce experiences (see Table 5:24), it was abundantly clear that

denigration of one parent by the other was one of their most painful experiences. This confirms Anthony's (1974) statement to the effect that "the most damaging thing for the child to contend with is the vilification of the parents of each other".

In the light of what is already known from the literature, therefore, the present study has not added a new dimension to knowledge by finding a significant connection between turbulence and maladjustment. Rather, it has provided further empirical evidence of such a relationship.

(ii) Is there a sex-difference in vulnerability?

Inspection of the p values for the adjustment of boys and girls in relation to interparental turbulence (see Table 5:16) suggested that there might be a sex difference in vulnerability, with boys tending to be more vulnerable than girls.* This apparent sex difference was very much in keeping with the findings of most other researchers in the area of divorce (e.g. McDermott, 1970; Rutter, 1970; Hetherington et al., 1975, 1976; Palmer, 1976). Rutter (1970) reported that discord and disruption in the home were consistently and strongly associated with behavioural disorders in boys, but not in girls.

As stated by Hetherington et al. (1976): "Sons of divorcing parents seem to be having a hard time of it".

Further indication that a sex difference might exist was suggested by the following tables:

* A statement to this effect was made by Rosen (1976) before the Ku and Kullback (1974) method of analysis became available.

Percentages of Well- and Poorly-Adjusted Children
in Relation to Level of Interparental Turbulence

Table 6:1 Boys

	Low Turbulence	High Turbulence	Total
Well-adjusted	52,6%	0,0%	52,6%
Poorly-adjusted	10,5%	36,8%	47,3%
Total	63,1%	36,8%	99,9%

Table 6:2 Girls

	Low Turbulence	High Turbulence	Total
Well-adjusted	39,5%	11,6%	51,1%
Poorly-adjusted	20,9%	27,9%	48,8%
Total	60,4%	39,5%	99,9%

In order to test this apparent sex difference, a three-way contingency analysis was necessary. (The chi-square method used in this study was not able to provide this sort of analysis.) Advantage was taken of the unexpected availability in this country (in mid-1977) of the Ku and Kullback (1974) iterative method of analysis. This method makes it possible to perform higher dimensional contingency analyses. It was accordingly employed in order to examine whether there was in fact an overall sex difference. The results of this analysis revealed that there was no sex difference.

It must be concluded, therefore, that in terms of the statistical analysis carried out, there seems to be no justification for inferring that overall sex differences for the various categories exist. This question, however, receives attention in 7.2 in relation to experimental hypotheses which await further research.

(iii) Rating of turbulence in the case of siblings

In considering the relationship between turbulence and adjustment, the query arose that the p values obtained might possibly be inflated in those cases where two or more children in the same family were rated. In order to examine this possibility, the ratings were extracted for the sub-sample where two children from the same family were tested. There were 20 such pairs for whom this data was available. A two-tailed t-test for correlated data was run: for $df = 19$, $t = 6.80$ with $p < 0.001$. This showed that including each child's score in those instances where two or more children came from the same family, did not inflate the p value for the relationship between turbulence and adjustment.

(iv) Practical implications

Psychotherapeutic intervention for children in families with a high level of turbulence could be of considerable value in preventing future maladjustment.

6.2.2 Child variables

6.2.2.1 Are children of divorce inevitably maladjusted?

It appears by no means inevitable that divorce leads to lasting emotional disturbances in children. Implicit in this finding is a distinction between trauma, and "damage" in the psychological sense. The present study does not suggest that divorce is untraumatic but rather, that children may emerge from the traumatic experience as "whole".

How does this relate to what is known from the literature? What are the practical implications?

(i) Evaluation of finding in relation to the literature

This is not a new finding. In 3.3.1 it was stated that the recent approach to the effects of divorce on children is away from the automatic assumption that it leads to disturbances. The present study therefore provides empirical evidence in support of this.

As there have been no reported studies similar in design to the present investigation, meaningful comparison of findings is not possible. McDermott (1968) and Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1976) found multiple behavioural disturbances in children following parental divorce. However, these researchers were investigating children far younger than were those in the present study, and were also examining them much closer in time to the divorce. The findings are therefore not directly comparable.

Palmer's (1976) conclusion that the children in her sample were not disturbed and did not differ from children from non-divorced homes, is very similar to the conclusion arrived at by this investigator. However, the methodological approaches adopted by the two studies differ markedly.

The findings of the present study are similar in essence to those emanating from some of the sociological surveys reviewed in 3.4 (e.g. Landis, 1962; Burchinal, 1964) although here again the methodological approach is entirely different.

The point of view expressed by Kelly and Wallerstein (1977), namely, that divorce is stressful for most children and constitutes a potential developmental interference for children in a non-clinical population, is in keeping with the orientation of this writer. In spite of the potential dangers acknowledged as inherent in divorce, however, Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) also refer to a "developmental surge" in some of the children in their sample following the divorce, reflecting divorce as a "stimulus to growth and maturity" (see 3.4.7). These authors (1974) also refer to greater independence and maturity in their adolescent group a year after having mastered the crisis of divorce. Westman and Cline (1971) and more recently Luepnitz (1977), have also suggested that the divorce experience may strengthen the child's coping skills and his capacity to master stress.

In the light of the above findings, the children's subjective comments in the present study are of particular interest: some of them perceived themselves as having benefited as a result of the divorce, in terms of greater maturity and more sensitivity with regard to human relationships; in other words, the divorce was perceived as a growth experience (see 5.3.1.8 (ii); also 6.2.2.5), confirming what Westman and Cline (1971) and Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) have found.

The suggestion (see 5.3.1.8 (iii)) that children's divorce-related problems improve with the passage of time, is compatible with Rutter's (1971) view that the effects of disharmony are not necessarily permanent, and that consequently the child's psychological state can be expected

to improve once the family situation improves. Findings reported by Hetherington et al. (1975; 1976) and by Wallerstein and Kelly (1974; 1975; 1976) support this. Hetherington et al. found that by two years after the divorce, a re-establishment of family functioning had occurred. In Wallerstein and Kelly's study, most of the children manifested an improvement in the clinical picture they presented by the one-year follow-up, compared to what they were like when first seen, shortly after the divorce. It is unfortunate that the results of these researchers' four year follow-up investigation are not yet available, for it would have been extremely interesting to compare their findings with those of the present study. The prediction could be made that the four year follow-up will reveal an even greater degree of post-divorce adjustment.

The above findings are very much in keeping with Clarke's (1968) belief in plasticity and resilience, and with the work of Skeels (1966). Clarke and Clarke (1975) in discussing the reversibility of the effects of social deprivation, argue against the belief that early experience dictates a predetermined course of development, and state that "... the passage of time provides many surprises, good and bad, about particular individuals".

(ii) Is divorce a loss experience?

Divorce without doubt brings about a complete change in family dynamics, so that the child's relationships with both parents can be expected to undergo significant modifications. Is one justified, however, in conceiving of these changes in the parent-child relationship as "loss"?

It is relatively rare for all contact between the "absent" parent and the children to cease. In the present study, for example, 90% of the children continued in a relationship with their non-custodial parents.

It is a well-known phenomenon for mothers to report that whereas prior to the divorce the father showed very little real interest in his children, he subsequently seems far more actively involved with them. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1975) found that at two months after the divorce, 25% of non-custodial fathers in their sample, in their eagerness to maximize access rights, were having more face-to-face contact with their children than they had before the divorce. Similarly, Wallerstein and Kelly (1975) found that 44% of fathers (non-custodial) in their pre-school group had by one year after the divorce developed a closer relationship with their children than they had originally enjoyed. The dynamics of this can perhaps be explained on the basis of guilt toward the children, of a feeling of being "left out", of a more relaxed state of mind without the tensions of the marriage to cope with; but whatever the reason, the fact remains that father-child contact does continue after divorce. The father is therefore still able to act as an identification figure for his children, and he can, and does continue to have a psychological impact upon them. The same would be true of mother-child contact where father was custodian (see also 6.3.1.2).

Relating this to what has been said about family functioning, (see 3.1.3), it will be remembered that according to Lidz (1970), the most severe form of faulty coalition is no coalition, that is, where one parent is missing from the family. Lidz has also said, however, that it is possible for the parents to maintain a coalition with regard to the children, even in cases of divorce (see also 6.3.2.1). This suggests that he is not automatically assuming that divorce means "losing" a parent. There is a distinction between a "missing" or "absent" parent, and a non-custodial parent.

The above argument is in accord with Rutter's (1972) contention that physical separation is not synonymous

with bond disruption. It is put forward as one explanation of the finding that divorce does not necessarily lead to disturbances in children. It also explains the discrepancy between the findings of this study, together with those of Rutter (1971), Westman et al. (1971), Wallerstein and Kelly (1974; 1975; 1976) and Hetherington et al. (1975; 1976) in the light of the early maternal and paternal deprivation studies, in which dire consequences resulting from maternal or paternal deprivation were described (see also 3.2.5).

There is no doubt that divorce means loss of an intact family; it does not necessarily follow, however, that the child "loses" one of his parents.

(iii) Change in attitude of society toward divorce

Whereas divorce was formerly perceived as a social stigma, with disapproval echoing in the reactions of friends, family and society in general, it has in recent years become commonplace. Sociologists (e.g. Goode, 1971; Rowlands, 1973) have expressed the view that divorce is no longer regarded as a shameful guilty secret. Could this be a factor in explaining why it is that children of today appear to be less vulnerable to divorce than was previously considered to be the case? Or would it be more realistic to conclude that the change has not necessarily been in the adjustment of the children, but rather lies in the fact that it has been only relatively recently that attempts have been made to measure adjustment, whereas previously maladjustment was simply assumed to be associated with divorce?

(iv) Practical implications (see also 6.2.2.6 (ii) and (iii))

The finding that divorce does not inevitably lead to maladjustment has very real practical implications in the light of the fact that one of the most common assumptions

or fears associated with marital dissolution is that it is not in the best interests of the children. This finding, together with the highly significant relationship between interparental turbulence and adjustment (see 6.2.1.3) is of practical value in that it opens up the possibility of preventative intervention in the form of counselling divorcing spouses, as well as families torn by turmoil. It highlights, in clinical practice, McDermott's (1968) caution that when disturbances manifest themselves in children from divorced homes, it is important to decide whether these stem from the event of the divorce, or whether they are symptoms of a more general disturbance.

These findings also carry with them implications for further research, confirming a suggestion by Goode (1956) and Schlesinger (1969), namely, that it might be more fruitful to compare children from different types of divorce populations rather than to consider "children of divorce" in a global sense.

The fact that the sample was on the whole not found to be maladjusted does suggest that the majority of decisions had, in the final analysis, been "in their best interests", notwithstanding the fact that individual errors of judgment in this regard do stand out (see also 6.2.1.1 (v)). In drawing conclusions from this, however, it is important to remember that these decisions had for the most part been made by the parents and not by the court.

Finally, a note of warning: caution should be exercised in generalising from findings based on clinic populations, to the general population. The writer is here in agreement with McDermott (1968) who points out that there are many more children from divorced homes who do not become patients than those who do. There may, however, be much to be gained from studying those divorced families who have not become part of a psychiatric population. By discovering the means whereby they have weathered the

storm of divorce, researchers may come a step closer to developing preventative techniques for helping more vulnerable families.

6.2.2.2 Age at time of divorce

No relationship emerged between the child's age at the time of the divorce, and adjustment as measured several years later.

(i) Evaluation in relation to the literature

The above finding might on initial consideration appear to be surprising, particularly in the light of what has been written about vulnerable ages in child development (e.g. Bowlby, 1951, 1969; Skard, 1965) as well as in the light of what some researchers (e.g. McDermott, 1970; Westman et al., 1970; Kalter, 1977) have suggested would be the case.

It is important to be aware of two major limitations in knowledge in this field. Firstly, although several writers have put forward theories and expectations regarding the differential effects of divorce according to the developmental stage in the child's life at which it occurs, there has to date been no empirical investigation of this in terms of long-term consequences. Wallerstein and Kelly's four-year follow-up findings, when available, might be of considerable relevance here.

Furthermore, a review of the literature reveals that there is by no means complete agreement on the issue of vulnerable ages in relation to divorce (see 3.4.8). A review of studies on maternal deprivation reveals the same lack of agreement as to the ages most vulnerable for this to occur. It emerges clearly from the literature that the observable symptoms of conflict are determined at least in part by the developmental level of the child.

According to Bowlby (1951), the first three years are vital from the point of view of bond disruption. According to his framework one would expect the most severe problems in children who had been separated from their parents during this period. The results of the present investigation do not support this; children who were three years or under at the time of parental divorce were no less well-adjusted at the time of the examination than was the group as a whole (see Appendix 27, P/O 9).

The discrepancy between expectations based upon Bowlby's framework, and findings emerging from the present study can be explained on the basis of the argument presented in 6.2.2.1 (ii), namely, that the sort of separation that takes place in divorce is not synonymous with that incurred in more extreme forms of maternal or paternal deprivation (see also 3.2.5). In other words, it is suggested that bond disruption is not an inevitable consequence of divorce.

From what has been written about the divorce-related reactions of children of different ages, (McDermott, 1968; 1970; Wallerstein & Kelly, 1974, 1975, 1976; Kalter, 1977) there seems to be little doubt that each age group presents with its own particular cluster of behaviours and emotional reactions in the wake of divorce. This study does not present evidence to indicate that this is not so. What is suggested, however, is that with the passage of time these problems, evident in the immediate post-divorce period, eventually subside. Thus, the absence of significant findings regarding age of the child at the time of the divorce and later adjustment can be interpreted in terms of the retrospective design of the present study (see also 5.3.1.8 (iii)).

The view that the child's age at the time of the divorce is not a significant factor in determining later adjustment has been suggested by other researchers. Rutter (1972;

1976) has said that the effects of divorce, and of disharmony, are not necessarily permanent, and that children do recover. Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1976) in their investigation of the effects of divorce upon family members, start from the assumption that the family "would go through a period of disorganisation immediately after the divorce, followed by recovery, reorganisation and eventual attainment of a new pattern of equilibrium" (p.2). Luepnitz (1977) has recently questioned the extent to which children suffer lasting effects in response to the divorce. The findings of the present study support these viewpoints.

(ii) Practical implications

- (a) The present study has provided the first empirical evidence suggesting that children's divorce-related problems improve with time: this should introduce an element of hope to divorcees as well as to clinicians working with them (see also 6.2.2.1).
- (b) Even though the findings do not point to age at the time of the divorce as significant in determining the child's eventual adjustment, it is nevertheless considered important to take cognisance of what others have found regarding age-specific reactions to divorce. This knowledge could be put to practical use in counselling divorcing parents.

6.2.2.3 Sex of child in relation to adjustment

No overall sex differences emerged in relation to adjustment. The suspicion of a sex-difference in vulnerability to interparental turbulence has been discussed in 6.2.1.3 (iii).

6.2.2.4 Siblings and step-parents

(See 6.2.5.)

6.2.2.5 Subjective experiences reported by the children

This section will be concerned with sentiments expressed by the children regarding specific aspects of the divorce experience. The aim of this part of the investigation was to learn more about what the children themselves experience and feel regarding decisions made "in their best interests", and to look at some of the popular myths surrounding divorce (Rosen, 1977). Some of the children's responses have already been presented in Chapter 5. These will not be repeated here.

(i) Should parents stay together "for the sake of the children"?

This was considered an important question in the light of unhappily married couples so frequently stating as their reason for staying together that this was "for the sake of the children".

The statistically-determined relationship between inter-parental turbulence and adjustment was confirmed by what the children themselves said. The overwhelming majority stated in the strongest terms that they would not have chosen to have their parents stay together in conflict, and that they perceived this as extremely destructive. It emerged clearly that the tensions and hostilities in the marriage, rather than the divorce per se, had disturbed them most (see 5.2.3; Table 5:18).

The children's responses to the above question are very much in keeping with Reinhard's (1971) finding that a frequent response by adolescents who had experienced parental divorce was that they considered their parents' decision "one of the most sensible things they had ever done".

An expression of relief in response to parental divorce was also evident in the questionnaire responses of J.T. Landis' (1960) students, who had considered the pre-divorce home to be unhappy.

As with all generalisations, there are always exceptions, and it is important to consider those nine children who expressed regret that their parents had not stayed together, and those ten children who were unable to express a preference in this matter (see Table 5:18):

"Parents should seek help; they should do more to help save a marriage".
(Male, 24, father custody, age 14 at divorce.)

"I'd rather have them together, in spite of the fighting. Divorce is a horrible thought."
(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"Parents should stay together and not get divorced."
(Boy, 12, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

It is interesting to find that the seven oldest members of this group (extending in age from late teens to early adulthood) had all been rated as poorly adjusted. Included here were the only two divorcees in the sample. The interpretation of this finding is not altogether clear. It could suggest that maladjusted individuals are more likely to blame a particular set of circumstances for their own distress, or that they have difficulty in expressing a definite opinion. These are only conjectures. Further research would need to be carried out in order to provide the answers.

In this connection, the finding of Westman et al. (1970) that disturbed children tend in general to distort the explanation for the divorce, and continue to wish for a reunion between their parents even when this is totally unrealistic, is of interest.

The fact that 12 out of this group of 19 children were

under 14 years of age, is revealing. It could suggest that these children, by virtue of being still part of an ongoing divorce situation (see 6.1.2.3(ii b)), were unable to respond to this question according to its retrospective design. It could also mean that some young children do in fact want their parents to remain together, and that they have difficulty in coming to terms with the divorce until it is well and truly behind them in terms of time and/or their developmental level. It is possibly only later, when the pain of the divorce has receded, that they might be more likely or willing to perceive it as having been preferable to the continuing parental conflict. In support of this, several of the older children in the sample admitted that when they were younger they had wished that their parents could be together in spite of the disharmony; only as the divorce receded in time, were they able to perceive it in a positive light.

In this connection, it is interesting to consider Kelly and Wallerstein's (1976) finding that there is an acute need among 7 and 8 year old children for parents to be together in spite of hostility. These authors conclude that in such cases, divorce cannot be considered preferable to parents staying together in conflict. This is not considered contradictory to the findings of the present study, because of the age of the children concerned. It would be very illuminating to know the responses of the above group of children in Kelly and Wallerstein's study as assessed at the four year follow-up.

Whilst it is strongly suggested that children experience a sense of relief that their parents ended an untenable situation by divorcing, one must exercise a certain amount of caution in drawing conclusions from this. It was mentioned earlier that Anthony (1974) has expressed concern about the possibility of retrospective falsification in interviewing children. Rowlands (1973) similarly cautions that one should not take what children say too

literally. He contends that when children retrospectively express relief at the parents' divorce, this is not necessarily an indication of the complete truth, for they are inclined to exaggerate the degree to which they would have preferred their parents to have separated. He does, however, concede that in certain circumstances parents do prolong the married state to the disadvantage of their children.

(ii) Extent to which children considered themselves adversely affected

The finding that children are not inevitably disturbed as a result of divorce (see 6.2.2.1), together with the examples presented in 5.3.1.8 (ii) are not intended to suggest that all of the children reported favourable reactions to the divorce, nor that children of divorce are never disturbed. It is important to look at those 31 children who reported that they did experience the divorce as damaging:

"I wouldn't wish it on anybody. I'm still shy to tell people my parents are divorced. I feel it's a disgrace."
(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"I see myself as damaged. I have difficulty in communicating with people. I dislike people. I feel a lack of trust ... "
(Male, 22, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"I'd have felt more secure with both parents. I felt it wasn't a completely normal life. It's easier now he's dead."
(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"Divorce is horrible for the children. I have headaches, I don't sleep properly. It worries me all the time and spoils my concentration on my work."
(Girl, 14, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

"I feel I've missed out on fun. There have been too many responsibilities. I never felt carefree."
(Female, 22, father custody, age 15 at divorce.)

The above quotations, although not selected on this basis, were all found to emanate from children who had experienced a high level of interparental turbulence. In fact, analysis revealed that 20 of the 31 children under discussion came from families with the highest turbulence ratings. The implication of this is that their negative reaction might well be associated with the turbulence leading to and/or surrounding the divorce, rather than the divorce itself. Again this is not meant to imply that children never react badly to the divorce itself, even in the absence of turbulence. It would be very surprising indeed if no children perceived the divorce as having affected them negatively. Findings do suggest, however, that whereas formerly it was regarded as inevitable that children were "damaged" following parental divorce, perhaps it would be more realistic to regard these as the exceptions rather than the rule (see also 6.2.1.3 and 6.2.2.1).

(iii) Parental behaviours experienced as most distressing

By far the most distressing parental behaviour reported was denigration of the one by the other, creating a situation of divided loyalties for the child. Forty-eight children (52%) reported this as the most difficult parental behaviour with which to cope.

"My mother told me how my father had made her suffer; this made me very guilty about loving my father."
(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"I wanted to see my father, but pretended not to because of loyalty to my mother. I knew how she felt and I didn't want to hurt her."
(Female, 25, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"My father says he can look after children better than my mother can. He thinks he never says bad things about my mother, but he does."
(Girl, 9, mother custody, age 3 at divorce.)

"We were blackmailed emotionally by my mother. We sensed her disapproval of my father, and it made me feel very guilty."

(Male, 22, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"Sometimes when my mother and father speak badly about each other I don't know which one to believe."

(Girl, 13, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

Related to the above behaviour is overt quarrelling between parents. Fifteen children (16%) reported being acutely distressed as a result of this.

Another major area of difficulty revealed by the children, occurs when the custodial parent overtly or covertly restricts the amount of contact between the child and the non-custodial parent. Some of their responses revealed considerable insight into the dynamics of parental behaviour.

"My father is punishing my mother by not letting her see us, but if he's doing this, he's punishing me too."

(Girl, 14, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

"Coming back to Dad on Sunday night was awful. He was brisk, apprehensive and stood outside waiting for us. We knew he'd missed us. We felt so guilty we scuttled into our rooms ..."

(Female, 23, father custody, age 15 at divorce.)

"I wanted badly to see my father, but my mother wouldn't allow it; she got very angry if we talked of visiting my father."

(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"I missed my father and wanted to see him, but I knew this was upsetting for my mother. I couldn't be loyal to both parties."

(Female, 19, mother custody, age 10 at divorce.)

"We pretended not to want to see Dad, for fear of hurting Mom; when we returned from having a good time, we indicated very lukewarm enjoyment."

(Female, 25, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

For discussion of other parental behaviours experienced as distressing see 6.3.2.1 (iii d); 6.3.2.2 (i b); see also Table 5:24.

(iv) Did the divorce affect child's desire to marry?

Most of the children stated that the divorce experience had "definitely" not affected their own desire to marry; on the contrary, many expressed a strong desire to marry, saying that they had benefited from experiencing what went wrong in their parents' marriage. Several of them said that their parents' divorce had taught them to exercise caution in selecting a marriage partner.

Analysis of the actual number of engagements and marriages (Table 5:26) is not in any way conclusive, because of the wide age range of the sample, which dictated that only a certain proportion could conceivably be married or engaged. Even the fact that two of them had already divorced should be interpreted with circumspection.

These findings are not entirely compatible with what other researchers have found. For example, J.T. Landis (1960) considered that some trauma in this area may result for children who recognised the implications of their parents' failure in marriage. Although his earlier study (1960) indicated that children of divorced homes were interested in marriage and determined to make a success of it, he subsequently found (1963) that children from unhappy homes had more frequent doubts about their chances of successful marriage. Wallerstein and Kelly (1974) similarly found among their adolescent group marked concern regarding their own future marriage.

Herzog and Sudia (1973) point out that despite the common assumption that growing up in a broken home is related to later marital disruption, empirical evidence is limited.

(v) Summary: What are the children of divorce saying?

The two main areas in which the children vociferously expressed their feelings were (1) degree of preferred access to the non-custodial parent (see 5.2.2.3; also

6.3.1.2) and (2) their attitude toward parents staying together or separating in the face of hostility and marital conflicts. The first of these, access, has been discussed in detail elsewhere and is consequently not repeated here.

Overwhelming evidence emerged to indicate that children retrospectively consider themselves the happier for not being exposed to on-going hostilities between their parents.

Seen in terms of Lidz' (1970) and Fleck's (1972) discussion of family functioning, it is not possible for parents to maintain a satisfactory coalition at the same time as denigrating and despising each other. Nurturance too is likely to be more negatively affected when unhappy parents live together in a state of turmoil.

The children's responses regarding the extent to which they perceived the divorce as personally damaging are very revealing: analysis shows that only 31 children (approximately one third of the sample) considered that they had been damaged, or negatively affected, and that two thirds of this group had experienced extreme turbulence in the parental relationship. This suggests that they might have reacted to the turbulence preceding and following the divorce rather than to the divorce itself.

The children revealed that by far the most difficult situation for them to cope with was a feeling of divided loyalties which arose out of the denigration of the one parent by the other. Related to this, they reported considerable guilt feelings associated with the knowledge that one parent (usually custodial) disapproved of their association with the other.

No meaningful conclusions can be drawn regarding the relationship between the marital status of the sample and the fact that they had experienced parental divorce, but on the face of it, it does not appear to follow that their

desire to marry is affected. Choice of marriage partner, attitudes to marriage and the course of their marriages would be extremely interesting subjects for further research, which would naturally have to be carried out on a much older and more uniformly aged sample.

The important point that emerges is that children of divorce have a great deal to say about their own experiences. It is suggested here that what the children themselves tell us may be used more effectively, and perceived as more meaningful by divorcing parents, than theoretical formulations alone (see also 6.3.2.1 (c) and (d)).

6.2.3 Parent variables

6.2.3.1 Adjustment of custodial parent

(i) Discussion of findings in relation to the literature

The close relationship between the adjustment of the custodial parent and that of the child, together with the strong link between interparental turbulence and parental adjustment, have both been postulated by previous researchers (Bernard, 1956; Goode, 1956; Wolff, 1969; Westman et al., 1971; Morrison, 1974; Kalter, 1977).

The question of a relationship between disturbance in parents, and maladjustment in children was raised by

Goode (1956) and more recently by Wolff (1969) and Morrison (1974), both of whom suggested that divorce might be conceived of as a symptom of parental illness. Westman et al. (1971) also saw a possible link between these variables and suggested that the divorce experience might be less pathogenic for children, than was the nature of their parents' personalities.

The relationship between parent's and child's adjustment can also be seen in terms of Fleck's (1972) theory of family functioning: Fleck suggests that manifestations of parental mental ill-health are learned by the children, resulting in faulty enculturation. In these instances, one form of maladjustment in the children would be deviant behaviour. Fleck also suggests that the nature of the coalition, or lack thereof, is determined largely by parental personality patterns.

This framework can be extended to include what has been referred to in this study as "turbulence": Fleck postulates a relationship between parental maladjustment, or deviant behaviour, and markedly deviant family dynamics (of which interparental turbulence could be one example). Given these two sets of circumstances, one can expect a negative impact on the child's personality.

Rutter (1971) considers it unlikely that the association between parental discord and anti-social disorder in children is due to disturbances in the parent's personality. He has suggested that a good parent-child relationship can go a long way towards mitigating the effects of disharmony in the family. Similarly Hetherington and Deur (1970) contend that the effects of father-absence can be modified by positive factors, such as an emotionally stable, loving mother. Considered in the light of the above discussion, however, this might not always be possible. If the parent's disturbance in fact is the base from which disharmony develops, then it might

rather be anticipated that these personality attributes would be carried into the relationship with the child, leading to disturbances in the children. This line of reasoning would corroborate McDermott's (1970) observation that the parent-child struggle leading to referral for treatment, was often strikingly reminiscent of the original turbulent relationship between the parents.

Whether the continued relationship between the custodial parent and the child is positive and supportive, or destructive and disturbing, would clearly depend upon the dynamics of each individual family.

(ii) Practical implication of findings

If children's chances of adjusting to divorce are less when the custodial parent is maladjusted, then one of the primary aims in working with divorcing families should be therapeutic intervention for parents (see 6.3.2.1).

(iii) Limitation with regard to measure of parental adjustment

Two notes of caution should be mentioned. In the first instance, it has been stated (see 4.1) that this study was primarily concerned with the child's adjustment; as such, it did not set out to assess parental adjustment in any depth. It is acknowledged, therefore, that the assessment of the custodial parent's adjustment might be somewhat superficial.

Furthermore, as in some instances two or more children from the same family were included in the sample, the interpretation of statistical findings regarding the custodial parent should be evaluated with caution (e.g. see 6.3.2.2 (c)).

6.2.4 Parent-child interactional variables

6.2.4.1 Parent-child bond

The lack of any significant relationship between the child's adjustment and bond with either the custodial or non-custodial parent is surprising, particularly in view of the emphasis upon bonding and attachment in the literature, especially by Bowlby (1969) and Rutter (1972) (see 3.1.2).

One possible explanation for the lack of significant findings in relation to parent-child bond was suggested in 6.1.6, that is, that it might have arisen out of a methodological limitation, the scope of the design not being wide enough to measure all variables in detail. It is considered more appropriate to regard the rating of bonding in this study as inadequate, rather than to regard the findings in this connection as negating what others have found (see 6.1.6 (i) and (ii)).

6.2.4.2 Parent-child communication

(See 6.3.2.2.)

6.2.5 Family constellation variables

6.2.5.1 Implications of findings

The main implication of the finding that presence of siblings, step-parents, step- and half-siblings in either the custodial or non-custodial home did not significantly influence the adjustment of the children, is that each case should be considered in the light of its own special circumstances (see 6.3.3.1). From what the children said about their step-parents (see examples, 5.6.3) and

about their siblings, it emerged clearly that there was a wide variety of reactions to these individuals, and that one would not be justified in generalising. Whereas for one child, presence of siblings was extremely important, for another, the need to be with a particular parent, albeit separated from siblings, was far more important. This is an important point to bear in mind when faced with a decision as to whether or not it would be in a child's best interests to be separated from his siblings in the event of parental divorce (see 6.2.5.3).

2.5.2 Findings in relation to the literature

Very few studies have empirically explored family constellation variables in relation to post-divorce adjustment. Considering the fact that the rate of remarriage, at least in the US, is so high (75% of all divorcees remarry within five years, and 18% of all marriages are remarriages for one or both spouses (Glick & Norton (1973))), the paucity of empirical studies emanating from that country in relation to step-parents, and step- and half-siblings is surprising.

J.T. Landis' (1960) finding that there was no relationship between presence of siblings, and the adjustment of children following parental divorce, is confirmed by the present study. Hetherington and Deur (1971) and Herzog and Sudia (1973) have suggested that presence of siblings may be important in modifying the effects of father-absence. This aspect of the post-divorce situation was not specifically explored in this study.

Kelly and Wallerstein (1977) consider that the presence of siblings is more comforting than it is destructive. They found that "only" children were more vulnerable to the stresses and conflicts of divorce. As mentioned in 6.1.2.4 this was acknowledged as an area worthy of scrutiny;

such scrutiny did not however fall within the scope of this investigation.

Biller (1971), in writing about the role of the father in the child's sex-role identification, comments on the absence of systematic consideration of the role of the step-father in the child's personality development. He is of the opinion that it is the quality of the child's relationship to the step-father that is important, rather than the presence of a step-father per se. This is in line with Rutter's (1972) views on bonding relationships. The children's responses in regard to their relationships with step-parents in the present study are very much in keeping with what Biller has said.

Other factors considered by Biller to be of importance are the quality of the mother's relationship with the step-father, as well as the mother-child and father-child relationship.

Sugar (1970) and Biller (1971) also postulate that the age at which the mother remarries might be a critical variable. Biller suggests that young children may find it easier to accept a step-father than would adolescents. Bernard (1956) in her comprehensive analysis of remarriage, put forward a similar suggestion. She also suggested that there is a difference in the way children react to step-mothers as compared to step-fathers, the former having the more difficult role. In her study, step-daughters manifested more adjustment difficulties in relation to their parents than did step-sons. In general Bernard found that the presence of step-parents in the home was associated with a diminished level of adjustment in the children. This finding was not supported by the present study. Perry and Pfuhl (1963), and more recently Kalter (1977) have similarly found no difference between children of divorce living in one-parent families, and those in step-parent households. Hetherington et al. (1976) on the

other hand, found that parents who remarried perceived themselves and their children in ways that were different from those who did not remarry.

It did not fall within the scope of the present study to fully investigate the above variables. The writer acknowledges that the broad "Family Constellation" variables as examined in this study require further and more detailed empirical investigation (see 6.1.6).

6.2.5.3 Divided custody ("splitting" siblings)

The finding that children do not always find the presence of siblings supportive in a divorce situation, and that presence of siblings was not related to their adjustment level, suggests that it may not always be detrimental to divide siblings between parents. It may be far more important for the child to be with the parent of his choice in spite of the fact that his siblings are with the other parent; in other situations it may indeed be unwise to separate siblings. As matters stand, siblings are all too often "split" as part of a bargaining process between the parents: e.g. the mother takes the girls and the father the boys, irrespective of the nature of the bond between the parents and children concerned (see 6.1.1.4 (ii)). The lack of real concern regarding the children's interests at the time of the decision is reflected in the fact that many of these "split" custody orders undergo modification after the divorce, thereby exposing the children to further upheavals and possible traumas.

It is strongly suggested that an order for divided custody should be made on one basis only, namely, by careful scrutiny of the needs of the children involved and by weighing up the importance of different relationships for the child. Division of siblings should not be made in terms of age or sex, but rather in terms of bond.

5.2.6 Socio-economic variables

Change in parents' financial status following divorce does not appear to be a significant factor in the adjustment of children. This confirms Traill's (1968) contention that children find it easy to accept shortage of money. Move to a new home after the divorce was similarly not strongly linked to adjustment.

Hetherington, Cox and Cox (1976) found greater economic stress in divorced than in non-divorced couples, with conflicts over finance being one of the main sources of post-divorce friction. According to their findings, divorced fathers were more likely than married fathers to increase their work load in an attempt to raise their income. This was not examined in the present study. Findings that did emerge were (a) that mothers suffer significantly more depletion in financial status than do fathers and (b) that related to their lowered economic status, they take up full-time employment to a far greater extent than would be expected in a usual middle class population (see Table 5:36).

Herzog and Sudia (1973) suggest that many of the deleterious effects of father-absence on children could be reduced if economic stability was provided for mothers. They regard the fact of the mother having to go to work as detrimental for children. In the present study there was no support for this contention. Similarly, in the study by Hetherington et al. no significant relationship emerged between economic stress in the parents, and level of parental-child interaction, or the child's behaviour in nursery school. These authors suggest as a possible explanation that their sample, described as "middle class", might not include enough people in whom the effects of economic stress could be detected. In a lower class sample, on the other hand, the greater extremes of economic duress might be associated with

variations in parent-child interaction or in the child's development. This same argument might hold true of the sample in the present study.

6.2.6.1 Practical implications of findings

The lack of a significant relationship between changed financial status or move to a different home, and adjustment of the children should not be taken to imply that children do not sometimes react badly to either one or both of the above circumstances. There was in fact some evidence to suggest that in certain instances these factors might well be important (see Appendix 32, P/O 16 and 19). It was seen in Table 5:23 that 14% of the sample (13 children) experienced considerable anxiety about money, while four children (4.4% of the sample) reported distress on having to leave the family home. With regard to the former, Wallerstein and Kelly (1974) found this to be a common theme among the adolescents they interviewed, insofar as it related to their future education and needs. On the whole, however, change in financial circumstances does not appear to be a vital factor. This is important to bear in mind in considering the merits and demerits of contesting spouses. The findings of this study support the attitude of courts in regarding socio-economic factors as amongst the least crucial ones in custody decisions (Payton, 1971; Sornarajah, 1973).

As all but three mothers in the sample were employed in a full-time capacity, it was not possible to examine whether or not there is a connection between the child's post-divorce adjustment and the "working mother". The writer would anticipate, based upon trends in the present study as well as from experience gained from clinical practice, that such a relationship would not emerge between these two variables, i.e. that children of divorced, working mothers would not necessarily be less well-adjusted.

This being the case, it would confirm what Schaffer and Emerson (1964), Rutter (1972), Ainsworth (1973), and Biller (1971) have said, namely, that it is the quality of the parent-child relationship that matters, rather than the amount of time spent together. Other researchers (Rutter, Tizard & Whitmore, 1970) have also suggested that there is no relationship between working mothers and psychiatric disorders in children. This is an area for further investigation. If the above hypothesis is confirmed, these findings would be of great practical value in helping to alleviate guilt in divorced mothers who find it necessary to take up full-time employment.

6.3 FOCUS ON CORE ISSUES

In this section the discussion will focus on six areas considered to warrant special attention. The first two, referred to as "legal issues", were the two main aspects of divorce that this study set out to investigate, namely, sex of the custodial parent, and access pattern.

The next two topics, entitled "psychological issues", stem from a combination of the writer's own clinical experience, perusal of the literature, and findings emanating from this study. These are areas in which the clinician is considered to play a vital role in working with divorced or divorcing families, namely, counselling these families, and facilitating the communication between parents and children.

Finally, two core issues of a general nature will be discussed: the need to consider each case on its own merits, and the role of the clinician in work of this nature. The importance of both of these emerged clearly throughout the study.

For purposes of clarity, an attempt has been made to separate the above issues. This has not always been possible, for they are, to a greater or lesser extent, all interrelated.

6.3.1 Legal issues

6.3.1.1 Sex of custodial parent

The most significant and important finding of this study is that sex of the custodial parent is not related to the emotional adjustment of children. This finding is considered to have far-reaching implications for psychologists, members of the legal profession, parents, and society in general.

What are the most important implications of this finding?

(i) Implications for court decisions

It is suggested that one of the main presumptions or guidelines used by the court in awarding custody (see 2.1.3) is open to serious reconsideration. One implication of this is that it could mark the beginning of the end of innumerable decisions made "in the child's best interests" which are in fact not in their best interests at all.

The "tender age doctrine" (see 2.1.3) which has guided courts in making custody awards over the past few decades, states that young children should be awarded to their mother. This is based upon the assumption that a mother is better suited than a father to cope with the task of nurturance. A clear illustration of the operation of this doctrine, together with the same-sex parent principle, can be seen in Watson's (1969) recommendation that all girls and all children of under 10 should go to the mother, and that boys of over 15 should go to the father (see 2.1.6). The present study has not found the premise upon which this recommendation is based to be empirically valid.

This discussion can be taken a step further: having ascertained the age distribution of children awarded to the custody of their mothers and fathers (see Table 5:2), an attempt was made to examine the adjustment of those children who had been awarded to their father's custody at a "tender" age (i.e. below 7 years), and to compare this to the adjustment of children who at this age had been awarded to their mother. The two groups were found to be similarly adjusted. It is thus strongly suggested that the "tender age" doctrine is open to critical reappraisal. Similarly, placement with the same sex parent was found to make no difference to children's adjustment (see Table 5:3).

(ii) Meeting need for research

The present study represents the first attempt at empirical investigation of a very basic issue, namely, the differential effects of the sex of the custodial parent upon the emotional adjustment of children. The lack of empirical research into custody and related matters has been repeatedly stated throughout the reviews of the literature, by people from different, but connected disciplines (e.g. Ellsworth & Levy, 1969; Derdeyn, 1974, 1975; Weiss, 1975). More particularly, there is a total absence of systematic empirical data relating to children reared exclusively by their fathers (Ellsworth & Levy, 1969; Bradbrook, 1971; Levine, 1976). Far from examining the extent to which the custodial father is able to meet the child's needs, previous studies have completely disregarded custodial fathers as a significant factor. In this investigation the way has been opened to the study of aspects of divorce in terms of court decisions regarding custody.

Many legal writers (e.g. Benedek, 1972; Title, 1974; Taylor, 1975) have over the past few years expressed the view that sex of the custodial parent should not be of crucial importance in awarding custody, and have recommended that the emphasis should be away from generalisations based primarily upon sex, and rather toward consideration of each case on its own merits. The present study has lent the weight of empirical research to what has up till now been theoretical formulation.

(iii) The finding in relation to the psychological literature

An important source of influence regarding the application of the tender age doctrine has come from the work of Bowlby and other researchers into maternal deprivation in the early 1950's.

In 3.2.4.5 recent doubts regarding the relevance of the maternal and paternal deprivation studies for custody decisions were discussed, the main argument being that the circumstances involved in divorce and in deprivation are far from synonymous. Furthermore, it was seen in 3.2 that there has been a great deal of confusion with regard to the above studies, arising out of a lack of clarity of the actual definition of "maternal deprivation" and "father absence", and an appreciation of the extent to which these are all-or-nothing issues. It was pointed out for example, that the early maternal deprivation studies should more appropriately have been considered "parental" deprivation studies, for in these investigations children had in fact been separated from both parents, and not only from the mother. As such, the above studies have not provided courts with a valid framework upon which to base custody awards. This is doubtless what Title (1974) meant when he referred to the lack of conclusive scientific evidence in the literature to show that the mother was more important than the father in child development. In the light of the confusion surrounding the above studies, the finding regarding sex of custodial parent is not altogether surprising. It is in keeping with Rutter's (1972) contention that the quality of the parent-child relationship is more important than the sex of the parent with whom the child has the relationship. "... a child needs to have the presence of a person to whom he is attached but it is irrelevant whether or not this person is his mother." Taking Rutter's argument to its logical conclusion, if it is the bond formation that matters, rather than the person with whom the attachment is formed, then it follows that this person does not necessarily have to be a parent at all. This can be seen in the light of what Foster and Freed (1964), and Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (1973) have said concerning "psychological" as opposed to "biological" parents (see 2.1.6).

Bowlby, in his earlier writings, emerged as the most powerful proponent in favour of the greater importance of the mother in child-development. More recently, however, he has modified his views, and has stated, as does Rutter, that more important than the mother-child bond is the quality of the nurturance and of the attachment relationship itself. The implication to be drawn from this is that a father could conceivably "mother".

Considered in this light, the finding of this study in relation to sex of the custodial parent is compatible with current psychological theory.

6.3.1.2 Access pattern

Whilst the primary aim in custody decisions is to meet the child's best interests, custody is usually not an all-or-nothing matter. It was considered important to ascertain how best a continued relationship with both parents could be implemented in families broken by divorce. The most striking clinical finding was the strong need for free access, expressed by many of the children.

Although no significant relationship emerged between access pattern and adjustment it was clearly revealed, both statistically and clinically, that the children perceived the divorce as least traumatic where freedom of access had been permitted, and that they had experienced least problems with regard to access when these conditions had prevailed (see 5.2.2.2 (iv) and (v)). Frequency of

access was also found to be linked to the children's perception of divorce-related problems, although once again, not to their general adjustment.

(i) Discrepancy between clinical and statistical findings

It is important to comment on the fact that the relationship between the statistical measure of adjustment and access pattern did not support the clinical findings. The possibility that this anomaly might be resolved in a different way in subsequent research cannot be totally discounted. It is, however, strongly contended that any such change, if at all, would not be marked: a high level of confidence in the clinical findings is retained.

In the absence of correspondence between the children's subjective reports and the adjustment score, however, caution should be exercised in making dogmatic statements. Perhaps the best way of regarding the findings is to conclude that some children are undoubtedly adversely affected by a lack of free access. Statistical corroboration for this statement is found on inspection of the data on the relationship between access pattern and adjustment (see Appendix 30, P/O 1): of the least well-adjusted half of the sample ($N = 43$), only 14 had had free access to the non-custodial parent. A similar link between adjustment and frequent access can be observed (Appendix 29).

The lack of a statistically determined relationship between adjustment and free access, considered in the light of the strength of the children's responses when discussing their feelings in this regard, leads to the postulation that adjustment, as measured in this study, may not necessarily be synonymous with acceptance of the status quo. It is conceivable that in spite of the fact that a child could be unhappy about certain aspects of his life, such as, for example, not having seen enough of the

non-custodial parent, he could nonetheless adapt to his circumstances, cope well with life, and score high on adjustment. This being the case, it would be easier to understand the above apparently anomalous finding.

It is strongly suggested that even where the ultimate adjustment of children might not necessarily be impaired as a result of restricted access, their sense of well-being is undoubtedly affected. These children are far more likely to perceive the divorce as having affected them negatively.

(ii) Is "Reasonable Access" a meaningful concept?

After protracted deliberation about which parent will best serve the child's needs as custodian, courts tend commonly to dismiss the question of the continued relationship between the child and the non-custodial parent by granting "reasonable access". Furthermore, when the court remains silent on access, according to the law, at least as practised in South Africa (Hahlo, 1975) and in the US (Cage, 1970), this by implication means that it should be "reasonable" (see 2.1).

The writer's awareness of the need for scrutiny of this concept arose long before the commencement of this thesis. During the course of clinical practice with divorcing families, it was found that a multitude of access-related problems arose where "reasonable access" had been ordered by the court. It appeared that this order left the way open for individual interpretations by parents, which were not necessarily in keeping with the best interests of the children. This was confirmed by the present study (see Table 5:15, 5.2.2.4) and substantiates a suggestion put forward in a previous paper (Rosen & Abramovitz, 1975).

It is not advocated that courts should provide an all-

embracing definition of what constitutes "reasonable". Rather it is suggested that, with the assistance of clinicians (see 6.3.3) the meaning of "reasonable" for each individual family should be carefully assessed, so as to prevent later possible abuse of the order. In other words, whereas for one family it may be "reasonable" to have free contact between the child and the non-custodial parent, for another family no access at all may be "reasonable".

The assessment of what is "reasonable" access for each individual child constitutes an important aspect of investigation and of counselling divorcing families (Rosen, 1977a; see also 6.3.2.1).

(iii) Evaluation of findings in relation to the literature

A survey of the literature (see 2.2) reveals a trend toward accepting that free access, as opposed to rigidly defined access, is more in keeping with children's needs (e.g. Sanctuary and Whitehead, 1970; Payton, 1971; Westman, 1972). This is confirmed by the present study. Statements made by many of the children confirm Westman's (1972) contention that "routinized obligated visits" do not meet their needs; they also confirm Sanctuary and Whitehead's (1970) suggestion that the problems of children following parental divorce could be reduced by freer, as contrasted with restricted, access.

Some empirical evidence in support of free access was reported by Kelly and Wallerstein (1976) (see 3.4.7). Similarly, McDermott (1968) and Westman et al. (1970) both found that where there was a satisfactory post-divorce agreement between the parents, children did not present with behavioural problems (see 3.4.4; 3.4.5).

A study by Hetherington et al. (1976) has indicated that there may be an association between frequency of access

and a positive relationship between the child and the custodial parent. Their findings revealed that when there was support and agreement between divorced couples regarding child-rearing, there was less disruption in family functioning. The converse was also true. These findings support Lidz's (1970) contention that it is possible for ex-spouses to maintain a workable coalition with respect to their children. It is precisely this sort of coalition that post-divorce counselling would hopefully set out to achieve (see 6.3.2.1). The significant link between the adjustment of the custodial parent and free access revealed by the present study, provides more reason for the importance of counselling.

Palmer (1976) favours regular rather than frequent access. She suggests that the latter might be too disruptive. It is conceded here that depending upon the age of the child this might be a valid point (see (v b) below).

A noteworthy exception to the general trend toward a greater acceptance of free access is to be found in the recommendations of Goldstein, Freud and Solnit (1973) (see 2.2.2). Findings of the present study strongly suggest that Goldstein et al., in making a recommendation aimed at protecting children from stress and unhappiness, may in fact be advocating a measure that could in the final analysis be even more traumatic for them. It is likely that if access were to cease - and this would be inevitable in a great many cases, once the final decision were left to the custodial parent - the child would have to face an even more serious break in continuity, namely, the cessation of his relationship with the non-custodial parent. The children in this study have stated loudly and clearly that they want this relationship to continue, and that they want freedom of choice as to the manner in which it continues. It is therefore suggested that a programme of parental counselling aimed at encouraging free access, albeit a lengthy matter, would go a long

way toward allaying many of the fears expressed by Goldstein et al.

Whilst in agreement with the reasons set out by Littner (1973) regarding the importance of access, the present study does not support his somewhat extreme point of view (see 2.2.2). Just as it is important for children to know that they are free to see the non-custodial parent when they want to, so is it important for them to know that they do not have to see this parent against their will. The latter can be regarded as part of the same dimension of freedom. (In this connection, it is interesting to note that two children in the present study (Table 5:23) reported, as a specific divorce-related problem, that they had been made to see the non-custodial parent against their will.)

It is suggested that "the mere fact" (Hahlo, 1975) that a child does not want to see the non-custodial parent should be seriously regarded: to force him to do so against his will is to lose sight of his needs, and may very likely have the effect of further distantiating him from this parent. In Hahlo's (1975) comment on *Germani v Herf* he expresses this very clearly (see 2.2.4).

Findings support the views expressed, among others, by Watson (1969) and Gardner (1976), who regard a satisfactory access arrangement as vitally important in children's post-divorce adjustment.

(iv) Implications of findings

(a) Assistance to courts and clinicians

The findings are of special importance for anyone involved in working out schedules for access in such a way as to meet the best interests of children.

The fact that 61% of the sample reported that they

would have chosen free access, cannot be ignored. It suggests that encouragement of this type of access, where possible (see (v) below) would go a long way toward reducing tensions and frustrations in children of divorce. Most of the children indicated that a continued relationship with the non-custodial parent was important to them. Thirty-three percent of the sample considered that they had not had as much contact as they would have liked with this parent. This is a vital starting point for advising courts, clinicians and parents alike.

The most important finding from the point of view of the court relates to "Reasonable Access" (see (ii) above). The practical application of the finding regarding free access is limited, however, for most cases involving access that come before the court are those with a very high level of interparental turbulence. To recommend free access under these circumstances would be unrealistic. This is borne out by the finding that the higher the level of interparental turbulence, the less the likelihood of free or of frequent access.

From the clinician's point of view, the findings would seem to have definite value. The clinician frequently finds himself in the position of advising divorcing families. If he thinks that free access is desirable, he can, by means of counselling and psychotherapy with parents, aim at achieving this (Rosen, 1977a) (see also 6.3.2.1 (iii b)).

(b) Meeting need for research

As was true of custody, a review of both legal and psychological literature at the time of commencing this study revealed that there had been no attempts to investigate empirically the differential

effects of, or children's attitudes to, varying forms of access arrangements.

Emerging clearly from the outline of the different approaches to the problem of access from both the legal and psychological points of view (see 2.1) is a lack of clarity as to which types of access best meet children's needs. Points of view have covered the complete range of possibilities, from recommending no access at all, to advocating completely unrestricted access. In the light of this confusion it is suggested that the present study meets a need for clarification of these issues.

(v) Some advantages and disadvantages of free access

(a) Advantages

The most important advantage of free access is that this appears to be very meaningful for many children (see examples, 5.2.2.3).

The particular aspect of free access that children seem to value is that the actual amount of time spent with the non-custodial parent is governed by their own inclinations. In this connection it was of interest to find that what seemed to matter most to the children was the knowledge that they were free to see as much or as little as they wanted of the non-custodial parent; indeed, once secure in this knowledge, many of them elected to see this parent only occasionally (see Table 5:9 and 5:11).

In contrast to free access, regulated access, with its emphasis on set times, does not take into account the importance of spontaneity in the parent-child relationship, and may as a result lead to considerable stress and frustration in children as well as

in parents. Once again, the examples of what the children said (see 5.2.2.3) illustrate this very clearly.

(b) Caveats

By its strong emphasis on the importance of free access, this study does not intend to advocate that there should be no structure governing access arrangements. It is fully acknowledged that free access would not meet the needs of all children. For example, it may be too unstructured and impractical for very young children for whom a more regulated form of access might be more suitable. Steinzor (1969) is not generally in favour of regulated visiting schedules; he too concedes, however, that for very young children, regularity might be desirable in helping them to overcome their feelings of abandonment. He considers that by the age of 7 or 8 years the child and non-custodial parent can make their own access plans. It did not fall within the scope of the present investigation to explore this possibility.

It is also acknowledged that many parents would find it extremely difficult to accept free access. In some cases this may never be possible. By its very nature, free access presupposes a reasonably good working arrangement between parents.

Notwithstanding the above caveats, it is considered feasible to expect that in many cases (i.e. untested divorce actions) parents would be amenable to this concept. Some support for this statement comes from the finding that 38 children in the sample had in fact perceived access as "free" (Table 5:11). Thus, the recommendation of free access may be considerably less unrealistic than it might at first seem.

Attention is drawn to one of the main recommendations arising out of this study, namely, counselling for divorcing parents (see 6.3.2.1). If parents can be made aware of the importance of free access to the well-being of their children and can be helped to work toward this as an ultimate goal, then it is suggested that a considerable stride will have been taken in the direction of what Lidz (1970) described as maintaining a coalition in regard to the children, in spite of marital dissolution.

It is important to state that the above discussion and recommendations apply to so-called "normal" situations, that is, where there are no apparent external reasons why the child's contact with the non-custodial parent should cease, or be rigidly controlled. One should not overlook those situations where it may for many different reasons be preferable for the child not to see the non-custodial parent at all, or to see this parent only occasionally. Included here would be mental disorder in the parent, alcoholism, psychopathy, or any evidence of such attributes as could be expected to have a negative or harmful effect upon the child. Under certain circumstances the child's expressed antipathy toward seeing the non-custodial parent should also be considered; in instances such as these it is extremely important to try to examine why this came about (see 6.3.2.1 (iii b)).

Finally, it has emerged clearly that there is no rule that can be universally applied insofar as access is concerned. To quote one of the children in the sample: "In theory access should be unlimited; in practice it depends on the individual".

(vi) Summary of findings in relation to access

Arising in part out of the findings of this study, together with experience gained from clinical practice with divorcing families, it is this writer's conviction that all things being equal, the extent to which the child's relationship with the non-custodial parent is kept alive, the means whereby divorce does not mean "losing" one parent, and whereby identification with both parents is able to continue, is determined by a satisfactorily implemented access arrangement.

Free access has emerged as most meaningful from the children's point of view. This confirms a recent trend in both legal and psychological literature.

Strong doubt has been cast upon the meaning of the court order of "reasonable" access.

The importance of considering each case on its own merits, and of counselling aimed at successful implementation of access orders has been stressed. For a discussion of specific aspects of access-counselling, see 6.3.2.1 (iii b).

6.3.2 Psychological issues

6.3.2.1 Counselling divorcing parents

"It is a horrible waste of human knowledge and resources to fail to make the effort to help troubled families" (Foster, 1966, p.381).

As one of the primary aims of this investigation was to be able to advise divorcing parents as to how to help reduce trauma for their children, it is considered important to discuss the issue of counselling in some detail. The discussion will commence with a brief statement regarding parents' need for counselling. This will be followed by suggestions as to how this need can be met. The discussion will end with specific examples of ways in which counselling can be expected to have beneficial effects.

(i) Need for counselling

The importance of counselling for divorcing parents has been stressed by many writers (Brun, 1974; Foster, 1966; Watson, 1969; Westman, 1972; Gardner, 1976; Hetherington, Cox and Cox, 1976). Members of both legal and psychological professions have for more than a decade urged for greater communication and co-operation between the two disciplines in order to highlight and implement the need of divorcing parents for counselling (e.g. Brun, 1964; Watson, 1969).

An inquiry into one-parent families in Canada by the Canadian Council on Social Development (1971) found that the period immediately following separation was extremely stressful for many parents, with feelings of bewilderment, grief, anxiety, loss of self-esteem and helplessness. The presence or absence of emotional support, practical advice and guidance was frequently mentioned as making a considerable difference to the individual's capacity to

cope with the many demands associated with satisfactory adaptation to the role of single parent. Barker's (1968) contention that it is unrealistic to expect parents to handle the anger, pain, guilt and frustration which a divorce arouses "without allowing these feelings to spill over onto the child", is confirmed by Kelly and Wallerstein's (1976) finding that the divorcing parents in their sample were frequently too preoccupied with their own problems to be "available" to help their children. Related to this is the finding of Westman et al. (1970) that the children they studied had not been referred for help in the immediate aftermath of divorce. The implication of this is that in this period, parents are too self-involved to focus on their children and to perceive that they, the children, may be in need of help. Westman (1972) contends that the confused emotional state of divorcing parents, made up of elements of embarrassment, guilt, rage and humiliation, renders them unable to communicate the true explanation for the divorce in a manner which is meaningful to the children. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that relatively few parents who are in the throes of divorce spontaneously seek professional counselling (Hetherington et al., 1976). How, then, are we to meet the need for vulnerable children to be assessed and helped at the time of the divorce? (McDermott, 1970).

(ii) How can this need best be met?

Wolff (1969) has pointed out that during a crisis, people are particularly accessible to psychiatric help; consequently, help offered at such times can be expected to have profound effects on preventing future mental ill-health for all members of the family. Hetherington et al. (1976) stress the role of counselling around the time of the divorce in alleviating the problems encountered by both parents and children. Wallerstein and Kelly

(1977) found that many parents, despite their own preoccupations (see (i) above), are relatively accessible to interventions regarding their children immediately following the separation. They are of the opinion that delay in counselling may result in unnecessary confusion and unhappiness in parents as well as in children.

Counselling services supplied by, or initiated by the court at the time of the divorce, may be of great value in reducing tensions, helping the family to prepare for the future, and minimising possible sources of friction.

Foster (1966) has discussed the role that courts could play in providing assistance for divorcing parents. He has presented impressive evidence of an extremely positive response by parents to counselling services in certain US family courts, whether or not these were optional or mandatory in nature. In particular, the reader's attention is directed toward Foster's description of the Toledo Court, Ohio, US. In this court parties are invited to avail themselves of a free counselling service by a team of psychiatrists, psychologists, marriage counsellors and case workers. Important work is carried out, sometimes lasting for two years or more, with the aim of promoting understanding and agreement as to the future of the broken family, and custody and access arrangements. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are a host of practical difficulties associated with this system - and in fact Foster has described the Toledo Court as "the most celebrated example of a family court in America" - it is urged that a start in this direction be made in this country.

In South Africa, clinicians are privately engaged as part of an adversary process (see 2.3) in order to assist the court in decisions relating to custody (see also 6.3.3.2). As such, they are all too often regarded as aligned with one side (Rosen & Abramovitz, 1975). It is the exception

rather than the rule for the clinician to act as advisor to the family as a whole. Furthermore, continued counselling and contact with the clinician after the court action, is usually left to the discretion of the parties themselves. The cost of private fees is often prohibitive; counselling may be prematurely terminated for this reason. Furthermore, if one considers that in the great majority of divorces, decisions regarding custody and access are privately settled by parents before the court hearing (Despert, 1953; Foster, 1964; Derdeyn, 1975) then it becomes apparent that as matters stand at present, an extremely small percentage of divorcing parents are accessible to the advantage of counselling.

It is suggested that parental counselling should ideally be made an essential part of the divorce process, irrespective of whether or not custody is contested.

One of the earnest recommendations arising out of this investigation is that members of the legal and psychological (including psychiatric and social work) professions should unite in attempting to arrive at a means whereby counselling could be offered to the majority as opposed to the minority of divorcing couples with children. The introduction of a counselling service associated with or attached to the courts, such as described by Foster (1966) would go a long way toward reducing the trauma that divorce means to the entire family. Furthermore, it is suggested that clinicians should be engaged by the court, instead of by opposing parties or their attorneys. One of the implications of this might be the creation of a new profession of psycho-forensic counselling. This recommendation coincides in time with a law commission at present under way, which is aimed at bringing about a change in the divorce laws in this country. One of the very areas under discussion is the possible introduction of family courts.

Some of the advantages of a counselling service associated with the court would be:

- * that more people would receive professional assistance;
- * that the clinician, being appointed by the court, would no longer be perceived as aligned with one side, and would therefore be in a better position to help all members of a family;
- * that both parents would be able to receive counselling;
- * that finance would no longer be an obstacle to people receiving counselling;
- * that counselling would continue after the divorce action and would thereby provide some way of ensuring that the court's recommendations were being implemented.

Finally, it is also important to ask: are the interests of the parents to be totally subordinated to those of the children? It should be stressed that unless a parent is at least reasonably satisfied with decisions made regarding the children, his dissatisfaction can be expected to have repercussions upon the children. It would thus be a short-sighted approach indeed to make decisions for the child in such a way as to leave one or both of the parents dissatisfied or unhappy. Kushner (1965) has emphasized the need for involving the non-custodial parent in counselling. By means of a carefully planned programme of counselling, the clinician could go a long way toward helping parents of divorce as well as their children.

(iii) Some important areas for counselling

If one accepts that counselling around the time of divorce may have far-reaching implications for the adjustment of the children, then the next step is to examine further some of the areas in which such counselling can be expected

to be most effective. This discussion will focus on areas highlighted by the findings of this study.

(a) Parent-child communication

This is central and vital. It is consequently discussed as a separate "core issue" (see 6.3.2.2). It should be made clear at this point however, that parent-child communication inevitably forms part of the way in which counselling can be expected to be effective.

(b) Access

The importance of access has been discussed in detail (see 6.3.1.2). One of the primary goals of a counselling programme is to plan access arrangement in such a way as to meet the needs of all parties concerned (Rosen & Abramovitz, 1975; Rosen, 1977a).

There are a host of access-related areas in which counselling could effectively diffuse a potentially explosive situation. For example, a frequent consequence of access is that the non-custodial parent indulges and spoils the child while the custodial parent finds it necessary to impose restrictions, routine and discipline, which may intensify the child's hostile feelings.

Another common problem arises when the non-custodial parent visits the custodial home indiscriminately, usually in the immediate post-divorce period. This has the effect of antagonising the custodial parent and confusing the child.

Some children in the sample stated that they were made unhappy when prevented from seeing the non-custodial parent as frequently as they would have liked (see 6.2.2.5 (iii)). The attitude of "he (or she) left us, why should

I let him see the children?", all too often found among divorcees, is one that is clearly potentially damaging for children, and totally out of touch with their needs.

A different sort of attitude on the part of the custodial parent, namely, the double signal which says "he wronged me and he hurt me, but he's still your father and you have to see him", together with divided loyalties and fears of hurting the custodial parent, may be one set of factors causing the child to feel that he would rather not see the other parent. Situations such as this call for therapeutic intervention; herein might lie the only hope of re-instating contact between the child and the non-custodial parent.

The above are but a few examples of how access-counselling at the time of the divorce could go a long way toward prevention of tension for all members of the family. The positive relationship between adjustment of the custodial parent and free access (see 5.4.1.9) confirms the importance of counselling.

(c) Interparental turbulence

It has emerged clearly (see 6.2.1.3) that this is the factor most closely associated with disturbances in children. Whilst it would be naive to advise parents embroiled in a bitter divorce to reduce the turbulence in their interaction, much in the same way as it would be unrealistic to advise a rejecting parent to "love" a child, it is suggested that counselling aimed at reducing specific aspects of turbulent behaviour which have been found to have a particularly disturbing effect upon children, could be successfully undertaken. Sentiments expressed by the children provide a clue as to some of the "specific aspects" (see Table 5:24; see also 6.2.2.5 (iii)).

The most significant "turbulent" parental behaviour reported as distressing is denigration of one parent by the other, creating a situation of divided loyalties for the child. Although Barker (1968) has stated that one of the most difficult things for a divorcing parent is to refrain from belittling the spouse to the child, it is conceivable that counselling aimed at curbing the specific act of speaking in a derogatory way about each other to the child, or in front of the child, might possibly be effective. Whereas a child could be helped to cope with a signal emanating from a parent, such as "I feel angry with your father", statements to the effect that "your father is bad" would be far less easily accepted.

Related to the above is a common tendency for a parent, usually, but not always, in the heat of the moment, to compare a child in a derogatory way to the "other" parent:

"My mother says I'm a skollie* like my father".
(Male, 23, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)

"My father always tells me 'you're going to grow up to be just as irresponsible as your mother' and that upsets me terribly".
(Girl, 14, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

These are regarded as "hitting below the belt" tactics, behaviours frequently arising out of emotional turmoil and always without thought as to their effect upon the recipient.

Arguing between parents is another stressful thing for children. Once again, this does not mean to imply, nor is it considered possible, that parents should suppress their emotions; it is suggested, however, that they

* Colloquial South African term meaning "good for nothing".

should at least be made aware of the effects of their arguments upon the children, in the hope that these could be reduced. (In this discussion the writer is starting from the assumption that the parents, although angry and emotionally upset, are not "sick". Counselling and psychotherapeutic intervention with seriously disturbed parents does not come under discussion here. It is important to make this distinction, however, lest the writer be accused of naivety in her expectations from counselling!)

(d) Further aspects of distressing parental behaviour

The focus adopted in this study has been to take heed of the children's expressed sentiments. Referring to Table 5:24 it can be seen that apart from turbulent interactions between parents, other behaviours were also experienced as upsetting. If clinicians are aware of which behaviours upset children, counselling again has an important role to play in attempting to prevent or at least reduce these.

One such behaviour is criticism of parents by step-parents, and vice versa. By conveying to parents that this practice upsets children, one may hopefully help to prevent it. It would be unrealistic to expect to alter existing patterns of behaviour in step-parents; however, the advice given to divorcing parents would hopefully be of a preventative nature: as 85% of divorcees remarry (Anthony, 1974) there is always the strong possibility that divorcing parents may themselves become step-parents at some future stage, or may at least marry people who would then become step-parents to their children.

Some children expressed distress regarding the sexual association of their parents with other people. This confirms an observation by Bitterman (1968). Wallerstein and Kelly (1977) have also recently reported that a common question put to them by their divorcees was how to relate

newly established social and sexual relationships to the children. Once again, as with interparental turbulence, it is not suggested that parents should be advised not to form such liaisons. It could however be explained to them that these relationships can be difficult for children to accept; counselling could be directed toward how best to prepare children for this, and how to cope with their questions. This relates once more to communication between parent and child, for if a parent is able to explain these things to a child, there is a far greater likelihood that the child will accept them.

Finally, the reader is referred to Table 5:23, in which is presented a list of specific divorce-related problems experienced by the children in the sample. Perusal of this list might be of considerable assistance to anybody undertaking counselling with divorcing or recently divorced parents. If parents can be made aware of those situations which children commonly perceive as destructive or difficult, then by intervention and counselling a start will have been made in the direction of prevention of stress for children whose parents have divorced.

The emphasis in the above discussion has been on counselling around the time of the divorce, in keeping with one of the main aims stated in 1.5.1, namely the prevention of trauma in children of divorce. It is indisputable and a truism that the earlier that counselling occurs in any potentially difficult situation, the more effective it can be expected to be. However, at any stage of a problem situation, counselling is preferable to a lack thereof; all matters discussed in this section can be applied to any period in the aftermath of divorce.

6.3.2.2 Parent-child communication

Parent-child communication has been selected as a core issue on the basis of the writer's conviction, arising out of clinical experience, together with a study of the literature, that it is vital in children's adjustment to parental divorce.

(i) Findings emerging from this study

(a) Parent-child communication and child's adjustment

The lack of a statistically significant relationship between these variables was surprising and difficult to interpret.

Brun (1964), Traill (1968), Schlesinger (1969), Westman (1972) and R.A. Gardner (1976), among others, have stressed the importance of communication in the adjustment of children to parental divorce. None of them have, however, attempted to measure this relationship empirically, but have (as in the case of the present investigator) based their conviction upon clinical experience.

One possible explanation suggests itself for the discrepancy between expectations and findings: the obtained measure of parent-child communication might not necessarily be an adequate reflection of the extent of this variable, as it does not include communication between the child and the non-custodial parent. It was established that in many instances children were more attached to the non-custodial parent (see Table 5:7; see also 6.2.1.1 (v)). It is thus conceivable that these children could have enjoyed more meaningful communication with this parent.

Furthermore, it is possible that a different method of assessing parent-child communication, e.g. family interviews, might have produced different results.

(b) Was the divorce satisfactorily explained to the child?

Clinical experience, together with a review of the literature, has strongly suggested that there is frequently a lack of communication between parents and children with regard to the divorce.

It was therefore considered important to ask a "non-clinical" divorce population to what extent their parents had given them a satisfactory explanation for the divorce. Is it only in a clinical population that communication is faulty, or is it a phenomenon typical of divorce?

The finding that only 45% of the children considered that their parents had given them a satisfactory explanation of the divorce would tend to confirm that parents frequently fall into error here. It is possible, furthermore, that the 16 children (see Table 5:34) who stated in reply to this question that they "hadn't thought about it" might also belong in the "unsatisfactory explanation" group. Three children spontaneously mentioned as a specific divorce-related problem (see Table 5:23) the fact that they had not been given a satisfactory explanation for the divorce. In general the children were observed to be defensive when responding to this question.

Just as some of the children denied "having thought about" the reasons for the divorce, so was it observed during the parent interviews that this question (i.e. how they had explained the divorce to their children) frequently caused parents to become tense and

uncomfortable; in some instances they too denied the importance of this kind of communication, saying simply that the child "had not asked any questions about it". Some parents openly acknowledged that they had not known how to broach this subject with their children and that they had consequently not faced it at all. In some instances parents openly stated that they had experienced considerable guilt about having remained silent.

These findings are in agreement with those of Wallerstein and Kelly (1977) who have reported that 80% of parents of young children in their study had offered no explanation to their children regarding their decision to divorce. These authors considered that many of the symptoms (e.g. fears, regressions) with which the children presented were at least partly attributable to this absence of explanations, which they found associated with shame, guilt, misplaced concern for the child, or simple lack of skill in conveying the information. This writer would suggest that another reason might be lack of insight on the part of the parent as to the child's very real need to know the truth.

The above findings strongly confirm that this is an important area for counselling (see 6.3.2.1 (iii a)). Although this study did not compare the level of parent-child communication in divorced and non-divorced families, the findings may support the conclusion of Hetherington et al. (1976) that divorced parents are less likely to use reasoning and explanations with their children than are non-divorced parents.

Parents should be made aware of their children's need to understand what is happening, and why it is happening.

"I had a real need to know why my parents divorced, so that I could understand them better. I asked them over and over again. I demanded to know. They said 'Wait till you're 21'. Nobody told me. I was upset that they couldn't trust me enough to tell me."
(Male, 20, mother custody, age 12 at divorce.)

"I wished and wished that my father had explained the situation to us. We were not told at the time and we didn't understand what was going on."
(Female, 25, mother custody, age 13 at divorce.)
(Note the need for communication with the non-custodial parent.)

"There are lots of things I want to know, but I'm too scared to ask."
(Girl, 9, father custody, age 5 at divorce.)

"Each parent sent us to the other for an explanation of why they divorced."
(Girl, 18, father custody, age 14 at divorce.)

"My mother said she was getting out of the house so that she could practise (music) without being disturbed. What a ridiculous story! We didn't believe it. I'm still resentful about this."
(Male, 25, father custody, age 16 at divorce.)

The following two consequences may result from unsatisfactory parent-child communication:

Without an explanation of the reasons for the divorce, children are not easily able to work through their own divorce-related feelings. Westman (1972) regards such an explanation as the keynote of a child's ability to accept and adjust to divorce (see also McDermott, 1970 (3.4.5)). Related to this is Anthony's (1974) suggestion that parents who refrain from discussing the divorce or expressing feelings in front of the children may actively foster mechanisms of denial and repression. Steinzor (1969) contends that the child's disturbance may be in direct proportion to the extent to which the tribulations of the unhappy marriage had been hidden from him.

The second point relates to feelings of guilt in the

absence of truth. Many writers have linked children's feelings of guilt and responsibility in relation to the divorce to the fact that they have been given an inadequate explanation (or no explanation at all) for the divorce (e.g. Brun, 1964; McDermott, 1970; Westman, 1972). Although this was not specifically explored in the present study, the implications are regarded as very real. The fact that many of the children were assessed as defensive in response to this question might be of significance here. It is entirely conceivable that lack of communication in this area could lead to guilt, the parent's silence leading the child to put his own interpretation on what has happened. Ignorance of the true facts leads to anxiety, confusion, and lack of trust.

The above lines of reasoning support Westman's (1972) conviction regarding the importance of assisting divorcing couples to be aware of possible reactions in their children and to help the child to express and discuss his feelings. Anthony's (1974) suggestion that children may need to be "helped to mourn" is relevant here.

(c) Sex of custodial parent in relation to parent-child communication

It was suggested (see Table 5:33) that mothers communicate more fully with their children than do fathers. Related to this are two further findings: The first of these refers to the attitude of the parents toward the value of counselling at the time of the divorce. Only 35% of the fathers, as compared to 68% of the mothers reacted positively to this idea. The remaining fathers were observed to be defensive and vehement in their denial regarding the need for assistance.

The second related finding refers to the fact that

of the 15 children in the sample who had been referred for psychological investigation (see 6.1.2.2) 11 were in their mother's custody as against only four in their father's custody.

These findings strongly suggest that mothers may be more sensitive to, and aware of their children's problems than are fathers. They are more likely to discuss these problems with their children and to refer their children for help. They are consequently more amenable or receptive to counselling than are fathers. It is regarded as highly unlikely that fathers do not in fact require assistance, but rather that they tend to deny this need.

In discussing the apparent sex-difference in the way in which mothers and fathers communicate with their children, it should be mentioned that, where two or more children in a family were seen, the possibility exists that ratings given to one child might not be independent of those given to another child or children. This may come about, for example, as a result of a particular parent adopting an attitude which might affect all children in the family (e.g. that one should not discuss divorce with children). This being the case, it is possible that the obtained p values might be exaggerated. Thus a certain amount of caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings. The obtained results of this investigation are, however, considered strong justification for differential parent-child communication by mothers and fathers to receive attention as an hypothesis generated by this study (see 7.2).

(d) Parent-child communication in relation to adjustment of custodial parent

The finding that better-adjusted parents communicate significantly more meaningfully with their children

strongly supports the plea for counselling at the time of the divorce (see 6.3.2.1). If parents can be helped to work through their own emotions, they will be more likely to be able to help their children.

(ii) Practical implications of findings

The findings discussed above lend some support to the clinical observation of this investigator as well as of other divorce researchers that parents need to be helped to communicate with their children, particularly with regard to the reasons for the divorce.

Clinicians should be aware of the need of fathers in particular to be helped to communicate, and to understand their children's need for communication. The vital role of counselling in fostering better parent-child communication cannot be stressed sufficiently.

3.3 General issues

3.3.1 Need to consider each case on its own merits

"All happy families resemble each other, but each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" (Tolstoy).

In recent years there has been a growing awareness in both law and psychology of the need to consider each custody decision on its own merits, and to avoid generalising.

In law there has been a movement away from accepting traditional presumptions or guidelines in custody decisions (Foster, 1964; Finlay & Gold, 1971; Hahlo, 1971). In psychology and psychiatry there has been an increased awareness of the individual vulnerabilities of children in relation to stress, and in particular, in the way in which they react to divorce and its sequelae (Westman, 1972; Anthony, 1974). Fleck (1972) has cautioned that while all siblings live in the same family, each one also lives in a family unique for him. The need to consider each child as unique is implicit.

Notwithstanding the above, however, a marked tendency towards generalising, by parents as well as by courts, is still all too evident in daily decision-making with regard to custody and access. Children tend to be regarded as collective members of a family rather than as individuals. Hence, so-called truisms still apply in practice, and, at least in South African courts, it is often difficult to proceed beyond some of the older guidelines, such as, for example, that all young children should go to their mother, siblings should never be divided, or that the non-custodial parent should always have a right of "reasonable" access.

From the commencement of this study, the writer has been acutely aware of the extensive range of individual variations in reaction to any given set of factors, and the consequent dangers inherent in generalising. Although there is little doubt that common trends do emerge, and that children of divorce do share many similar experiences and needs, it is extremely important to consider each case on the basis of its own individual features. Some of the findings are illustrative of this need:

Generalisations about the negative aspects of step-motherhood are well-known to professionals and laymen alike. In the present study, however, no difference

emerged in the adjustment of those children with step-parents as compared to those whose parents had not remarried. In 5.6.3 it is clearly seen that children have widely differing reactions to their step-parents. In at least two instances, children (rated as well-adjusted) reported a bond with their step-mother that superceded their affectional ties with either of their own parents; this relationship was in fact perceived by the children as the main factor responsible for their satisfactory re-adjustment after the divorce.

Similarly, it is usually accepted in psychology and in law that siblings should not be separated in the event of parental divorce. The findings of this study have indicated that presence of siblings was by no means crucial to the adjustment of the group as a whole. Some children did have a real need to be together with their siblings, and perceived them as a tremendously important source of comfort and support during the years of crisis and post-crisis. Other children, however, were non-committal about their siblings, saying that their presence had made "no difference" to their happiness or re-adjustment. Yet others expressed negative emotions in relation to siblings, vehemently stating that they wished they could have been placed in different homes. Is one justified, then, in making a global ruling regarding the importance of keeping siblings together?

An exception arising out of the main finding of this study, namely, that there is no difference in the adjustment of children when custody is awarded to father as opposed to mother, provides an example of the danger in generalising. A 14 year old girl whose parents had divorced when she was five, pathetically described her need to be with her mother, and how she found difficulty in communicating with, and identifying with her father: "I have headaches and I don't sleep properly, it worries me so much. Children should be allowed to stay with their mother. I

feel very loyal to my mother and I have terrible arguments with my father". (For examples of ISB responses see 5.8.1, example 2). This girl was rated as poorly adjusted. As her unhappiness clearly centred around her need to be with her mother, it is quite conceivable that, had this been the case, she might have presented quite a different picture.

Lest the reader should conclude from the above example that the "rule" that girls need to be with their mother is after all valid, the next example illustrates a diametrically opposite situation. A 17 year old girl awarded to her mother at the time of the divorce eight years earlier, was so unhappy as a result of this decision, that eventually her insistence was rewarded by her parents agreeing to let her live with her father. Since the modification of the custody order, she had been regarded by all as happy and well-adjusted, and was in fact rated well-adjusted in this study. "I wasn't happy with my mother. I kept getting sick. I didn't get on with the children at that school. I was never close to her - have always been closer to my father. I'd have been terribly unhappy had I stayed with her. Now I think I'm quite a normal child."

A common factor emerges from the above two examples*: it is clear that in neither case was there any attempt to assess the particular needs of these children in relation to the custody award. Had such an examination been carried out, and in particular, had there been an assessment of the bonding between the two girls and each of their parents, the first girl would clearly have been placed with her mother, and the second with her father.

It is essential to consider each case carefully on its own

* In neither of the two examples discussed was there any reported evidence of "unfitness" on the part of the non-custodial parents; the custody placements had come about as a result of an "arrangement" or "bargaining" between the parents.

merits, and to refrain from applying guidelines in an unguided manner.

6.3.3.2 Role of the clinician

A realisation is emerging in the legal profession that expert guidance can and should take the place of formulae and generalisations. In decisions relating to custody and access, increasing attention is being given to the opinion of the clinician (see 2.4). It has, however, also been indicated that in the majority of cases, these vital decisions are pre-arranged by parents, with or without the assistance of their legal advisors, and as such they do not even come up before the court (see 2.5). It is customarily only where custody is contested that the assistance of the clinician is enrolled. The fact that there is a "contest" means that an adversary procedure is followed. It has been shown (2.3) that much difficulty has arisen with regard to defining the role of the clinician according to this system; all too often he is perceived as being aligned with one "side".

It is strongly urged that the role of the clinician in decisions relating to custody and access be re-examined. The ultimate aim should be for clinicians to be appointed by the court, or by both "sides" simultaneously (i.e. by mutual agreement between the two contesting parties and their legal advisors). In this way the flavour of alignment to one "side" would fall away. This would facilitate the examination, and make it unlikely that parties would

refuse to be seen (see 2.3). The clinician's role should be clearly understood as attempting to meet the needs of the children. He should have the opportunity of counselling one or both parents as well as the child/children for as long a period as necessary in order to attain this objective. As discussed in 6.3.2.1, a vital aspect of helping children is to help their parents.

In South Africa there is currently a move toward a change in the divorce laws. As part of this change, we may hopefully see the end of the adversary system, as practised in divorce. Should this be the case, the role of the clinician would automatically undergo a drastic modification: alignment with one side will be replaced by counselling both parties.

The concept of engaging one clinician or team of clinicians for both parents is not new. It was suggested 20 years ago by Despert, and features more recently in papers by Westman (1971) and Derdeyn (1975). Until such time as this becomes the norm, children of divorce will not reap the advantage of the best professional assistance.

CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Main findings
- 7.2 Hypotheses and suggestions for further research
- 7.3 Closing statement

It is now appropriate to consider to what extent the findings of this investigation have provided answers and insights in relation to the aims and issues set out in 1.5 and 1.6.

A statement of the main findings will be presented. This will be followed by an outline of the hypotheses generated by the study, together with suggestions for further research.

7.1 MAIN FINDINGS

7.1.1 Sex of custodial parent

Custody awards made only on the basis of the sex of the parent are not necessarily meeting the best interests of children. Instead, the merits and demerits of both parties should be considered in relation to their suitability as custodial parents. Evidence points towards consideration of each case in terms of its unique circumstances, and away from generalisations based primarily on the sex of the parent.

The "tender age doctrine", together with the commonly accepted presumption that children should be placed with same-sex parents, are open to critical reappraisal.

The findings support the recent movement in the US toward considering each parent only from the point of view of who can better serve the child's interests and away from the automatic choice of the mother as custodial parent.

7.1.2 Access pattern

The need of most children to maintain close contact with both parents following divorce emerged clearly from this study. The relationship between the child and the non-custodial parent usually remains meaningful. For such children divorce is by no means synonymous with "losing" a parent.

An important clinical finding is that free access is the most highly valued type of access for the majority of children of divorce.

"Reasonable access" lends itself to a variety of interpretations, by parents as well as by members of the legal

profession, and is consequently not a meaningful concept. A closer examination of the meaning of "reasonable" is called for.

7.1.3 General adjustment of children of divorce

The recent trend away from assuming an inevitable link between divorce and emotional disturbance in children is strongly supported by this study.

The finding that subsequent adjustment is not related to age at the time of the divorce carries with it the implication that children tend to recover with the passage of time.

The study provides empirical confirmation of the link between interparental turbulence and adjustment in children, and suggests that it is the "children of turbulence" rather than the children of divorce who are the more vulnerable.

7.2 HYPOTHESES AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

These will be considered in relation to the four main sets of variables: divorce variables, child variables, parent variables, and parent-child interactional variables.

The hypotheses arising out of the study can be grouped into four main types:

- Type A those to which the present findings lend some support;
- Type B those which arise where expectations based on clinical experience, a survey of the literature, and actual clinical assessment during the fieldwork of this investigation were not supported by the statistical findings;
- Type C those which arise where data seemed on inspection to lead to significant findings, but this was not statistically verified;
- Type D those which arise out of insights stimulated by the study but which are not directly related to the findings.

7.2.1 Divorce variables

Hypothesis 1:

For optimal emotional adjustment, children of divorce have a need for continued contact with both parents. The relationship between access pattern and adjustment may differ for various age groups: whereas regulated access may be preferable for very young children, free access best meets the needs of older children.

(Type A; Type D)

A suggestion for further research arising out of this hypothesis would be an examination of the possibility that children of different ages require different patterns of contact with the non-custodial parent.

Related to the above would be a comparison of the adjustment of two groups of children of divorce:

- (a) where there was no contact at all with the non-custodial parent following the divorce;

- (b) where close contact was maintained with this parent.

Insights gained from such research would assist clinicians in advising divorcing parents.

Hypothesis 2:

The criterion for dividing custody of siblings between parents should be according to the strength of the respective bonding relationships, and not on the basis of sex or age.

(Type D)

A follow-up investigation of divided or "split" custody awards is considered a valuable subject for further research. Such an investigation might be able to reveal:

- (a) how satisfactory is divided custody from the child's point of view?
- (b) on what basis is custody customarily divided between parents?
- (c) to what extent is the division of siblings maintained in the post-divorce years?

Other suggestions for further research in relation to divorce variables are:

- (i) A comparison of the effects of different types of divorce experiences for children. Such an investigation might be designed to include: "emotional" divorce, the "friendly" divorce, the "turbulent" divorce, and the family abandoned by one parent.
- (ii) An investigation similar to the present study, but carried out on a sample drawn from a different community (e.g. a US sample) might yield interesting

results. This would also provide an opportunity of examining the proportion of custodial fathers and mothers in a different population (see 6.2.1.1 (iii c)).

- (iii) A retrospective investigation of contested custody cases. The aim of this would be to examine the extent to which decisions made by judges in these cases had met the best interests of the children.

7.2.2 Child variables

Hypothesis 3:

Children's divorce-related problems abate with the passage of time. Although the age of the child at the time of the divorce may be a critical factor in his reactions to the divorce and the way in which he copes with it, age-specific symptoms subside.

(Type A)

As there has been considerable divergence of opinion regarding the ultimate effects of divorce on children of various ages, further research should be designed so as to specifically measure this. A longitudinal approach would be necessary. In order to ascertain the long-term effects of the divorce experience, children of different ages at the time of the divorce should be seen at the time of the divorce, and again at varying intervals after the divorce.

Hypothesis 4:

Boys and girls differ in vulnerability to stress: boys are more vulnerable than are girls to discord within the family. The children of divorce most likely to be "at risk" are boys from homes where there is a high degree of interparental turbulence.

(Type C)

Further research should explore sex differences in relation to interparental turbulence and parent-child communication patterns. This should include an examination of the hypothesis arising out of this study regarding the differential response of parents to sons and daughters (see Hypothesis 6).

7.2.3 Parent variables

Hypothesis 5:

Maladjustment in children is not an inevitable consequence of single parents having to work full-time.

(Type A)

A comparison of the adjustment of children of divorced working mothers with those of divorced non-employed mothers would be needed in order to explore the above hypothesis. Findings if confirmed, could go a long way toward alleviating guilt in divorced mothers who find it necessary for economic reasons to take up employment.

Hypothesis 6:

There is a differential response on the part of parents to the stress experienced by sons and daughters respectively. Parents are more sensitive to stress in daughters than in sons at the time of the divorce. They tend to communicate more with their daughters who are thereby afforded more opportunity than their sons to work through their conflicts and anxiety around the time of the divorce. Daughters make a better adjustment than do sons to interparental turbulence associated with the divorce experience.

(Type C)

Hypothesis 7:

Parents who receive adequate counselling around the time of the divorce will be better able to communicate with their children, which will in turn assist the children in adjusting to the divorce.

(Type D)

The following suggestions for further research arise in relation to parent variables:

- (i) An investigation of remarriage of parents, and in particular the role of the step-parent in the custodial home. Such an investigation should include the nature of the bond established with the step-parent, and an examination of this bond in terms of sex of the child, age of the child at the time of the divorce, and at the time of the parent's remarriage.
- (ii) A study similar in design to the present investigation, but which would include interviews with the

non-custodial parent. This would hopefully provide valuable insights regarding the needs of the latter, and thus enable the clinician to assist all members of the post-divorce family.

7.2.4 Parent-child interactional variables

Hypothesis 8:

Mothers and fathers differ in the way in which they communicate with their children: mothers are more sensitive to their children's emotions than are fathers, and find it easier to communicate meaningfully with them.

(Type A)

Hypothesis 9:

There is a positive relationship between meaningful parent-child communication and the child's adjustment to divorce.

(Type B) Feelings of guilt and self-blame for the divorce may develop in children as a consequence of inadequate parent-child communication. Silence on the part of the parent may lead to anxiety and lack of trust in the child.

(Type D)

Two suggestions for further research that arise in connection with parent-child variables are:

- (i) An exploration of patterns of parent-child communication in divorced and non-divorced families, using

the joint interview technique (i.e. seeing children together with each of their parents) as the source of information.

- (ii) An in-depth investigation into parent-child bonding, and its relationship to post-divorce adjustment. Such an investigation should explore bonds established between the child and both custodial and non-custodial parents, as well as those established with step-parents.

Closing statement/...

7.3

CLOSING STATEMENT

It is hoped that the findings as well as the recommendations for further research outlined above, will help legal advisors, clinicians and parents toward the ultimate goal of reducing conflict in children of divorce.

It is recommended that lawyers and psychologists alike should accept the principle of one clinician or team of clinicians counselling both parents. This should replace the commonly prevailing situation of one clinician being engaged by one "side", and another by the other "side". The latter practice reinforces the flavour of alignment or partisanship, and the role of the clinician as fighting a battle between spouses, rather than fighting a battle for the child.

It is important at all times to be aware of individual differences in response to any given set of circumstances. Research, such as the present study, is aimed at providing guidelines; these perforce have to be of a general nature. Each child has the right to be considered as unique, albeit in the framework provided by the general findings.

At the outset the Eriksonian schema of psycho-social development was put forward as a basic framework of reference for this study. In his focus upon the successful resolution of developmental crises, Erikson's approach is a positive one. There are always developmental opportunities to "triumph over the psychological hazards of living". The optimism implicit in this framework is justified, for children of divorce, by the findings of this study.

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APPENDIX 1

SYNOPSIS OF ERIKSON'S EIGHT
PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES

The first ego-crisis is described by Erikson as Basic Trust vs. Mistrust. Erikson conceives of this phase, which is located in infancy, as setting the pattern for all later development. A sense of basic trust enables the child to grow psychologically and to accept new experiences. For the neonate a sense of trust requires a feeling of physical comfort and a minimum experience of fear or uncertainty. On the other hand, out of unsatisfactory physical or psychological experiences arises a sense of mistrust, which in turn makes the child apprehensive and fearful in relation to new experiences. (Benedek (1938; 1970) describes a similar process, but instead of using the term "trust" she refers to "confidence" which enables the infant to project expectations of gratification into the future.)

In infancy the development of a sense of basic trust is largely determined by the way in which the child's bodily needs are satisfied, that is, by the type of handling he receives. Love, together with the positive aspects of dependency, are conveyed to the child by the mother's behaviour - the way in which she holds him, smiles at him and so on. According to Erikson the quality of trust or mistrust depends upon the reciprocity involved in receiving and giving together with the degree of pleasurable experience connected with these acts. He locates in this first mutual exchange between mother and child the foundation for a sense of trust, as well as for the later ability of the child to identify with his mother. Erikson suggests that attachment to one central figure becomes crucial at about 6 months, and that separation during this formative stage, however temporary, can have markedly adverse effects upon the developing child. He also stresses the importance of the mother's underlying emotional state in her handling of the child, and relates this to the support she receives from other members of the family, in particular the father.

The second ego-crisis described by Erikson is Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt. This phase corresponds with Freud's (Neubauer, 1972) anal phase, which occurs between 18 months and 4 years. As the infant develops trust in his mother and in his environment, he discovers that his behaviour is his own, which leads to a sense of autonomy. At the same time, however, the fact that he is physically, socially and psychologically dependent leads to doubt regarding his ability to assert his autonomy and to exist as an independent unit. This conflict, in Erikson's theory, represents the main theme of the second developmental phase.

Initiative vs. Guilt is according to Erikson, the major theme of the pre-school years. During this phase the child's social environment typically challenges him to become active in the mastery of new tasks. His development in areas of language and physical prowess further aid him in expanding his field of activity. The process of active involvement with planning which commences in this phase is referred to as initiative, with the other end of the continuum being passivity, or guilt, relating to the contemplation of goals. During this stage the child's conscience increasingly assumes the supporting and controlling functions of the significant adults in his environment.

The fourth ego-crisis described by Erikson is known as Industry vs. Inferiority. The major theme at this phase is the child's thrust toward mastery and production. The danger inherent here is a sense of inferiority or inadequacy with regard to achievement. In this phase activity becomes competitive, in contrast to the earlier striving toward autonomy. The child finds new identification models, and dependency upon parents decreases. The peer group becomes increasingly important.

The fifth ego-crisis is Identity vs. Role Confusion. Just as a sense of trust was necessary in infancy, in order for the child to cope with childhood experiences, so Erikson regards a sense of identity as vital in facing adulthood, and coping with major decisions such as the choice of marriage partner and vocation. "Identity Consciousness then is a new edition of the original doubt, which concerned the trustworthiness of the training adults and the trustworthiness of the child himself - only that in adolescence such self-conscious doubt concerns the reliability and reconciliability of the whole span of childhood which is now to be left behind (Erikson 1956)." The crisis of this phase centres around striving toward a sense of identity, with diffusion and role confusion at the opposite pole. At this stage the parents enter into the adolescent's life only by virtue of their common past and their common anticipation of his future. At this period of his life the youth integrates all previous identifications, leading to an ego identity. He is now concerned with a search for a sense of self: identification with an ego-ideal no longer suffices.

The sixth stage is Intimacy vs. Isolation, the main goals of which are pursuit of a career, which may include time devoted to study, as well as relationships with members of the opposite sex, leading to selection of a marriage partner.

The seventh stage, Generativity vs. Stagnation, centres around the marriage union, which serves as the foundation for satisfactory development of offspring.

The final phase, Ego Integrity vs. Despair, can best be described in Erikson's own words: "... healthy children will not fear life, if their elders have integrity enough not to fear death." (1950, p 261)

APPENDIX 2

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF AGE
OF CHILDREN IN SAMPLE

Age at divorce	Frequency
0 to 2-11	12
3-0 to 6-11	26
7-0 to 12-11	42
13 and above	12
Total = 92	

Age at examination	Frequency
10 and under *	12
11-0 to 15-11	29
16-0 to 20	27
21 and above	24
Total = 92	

* Of this group nine children were 9 years of age,
and three were 10 years of age.

APPENDIX 3

SIBLING DISTRIBUTION
OF CHILDREN IN SAMPLE *

Only children		Children with 1 sibling		Children with 2 siblings		Children with 3 siblings		Children with 4 siblings		Children with 5 siblings		Total
Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
7	6	19	23	16	10	2	5	0	0	1	3	92

* irrespective of whether or not all siblings were seen in the investigation.

SIBLING DISTRIBUTION OF
ACTUAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN SEEN

	Number of families
One child seen	20
Two children seen	23
Three children seen	6
Four children seen	2
Total = 51	

APPENDIX 4

RATING FOR SOCIAL CLASS*

Rate according to father's profession. If retired, rate according to what employment used to be. If widowed or divorced rate according to what father used to do.

- CLASS I: Traditional aristocracy, millionaires, cabinet ministers, chancellors and principals of Universities, managing directors, or chairmen of boards of nation wide or international companies.
- CLASS II: Professionals, salaried executives, owners of large firms, operators of moderate sized enterprizes, students of universities and colleges, prosperous farmers and land-owners.
- CLASS III: Small businessmen, small farmers, clerical workers, white-collar workers, semi-professionals.
- CLASS IV: Skilled workers, qualified tradesmen, apprentices.
- CLASS V: Semi-skilled workers.
- CLASS VI: Unskilled workers, permanently unemployed.

* Taken from Hollingshead and Redlich (1958).

APPENDIX 5

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

(WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEGE)

Phone : 69-8531



DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

RONDEBOSCH.

7700

Name* and address
was inserted here
in same typeface

Current date

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear

*

I am a clinical psychologist and have worked for many years with parents and children, my main interest being in problems of child-rearing. I have been concerned for a long time about the problems of parents and children in cases where there has been a divorce in the family, and I have now embarked upon some research on this subject. I hope that this research may provide some answers which will be of assistance to all members of professions concerning themselves with the welfare of children, and, most important, to the people most intimately involved - that is, the parents and their children, and those parents and children faced with similar problems in the future.

With the above in view, I am writing to you in the hope of obtaining your co-operation. Your name is one of a random sample obtained from the Supreme Court records, of persons divorced between 1965 and 1970. You have my assurance that your name will never be disclosed, but will simply be given a number for purposes of statistics. I would like to emphasize that the study does not concern itself at all with the details of and reasons for the divorce, but rather with the effects of the divorce upon the children. This study is being carried out under the auspices of the Department of Psychology, University of Cape Town, and has the support of members of the legal profession. The real beneficiaries, it is hoped, will be the children.

If you are willing to co-operate, I will need to have a brief interview with you and with your child. Your help would be very much appreciated. I would be grateful if you would think the matter over carefully and I will endeavour to make telephonic contact with you in the near future.

Yours faithfully,

RHONA ROSEN, M.A. (Psycho.) (C.T.)

REASONS GIVEN FOR PARTICIPATION ANDNON - PARTICIPATION IN STUDYAcceptances

"If it will be of help to others"	36
"Interested in the research"	14
Having difficulties and would welcome discussing things	10
No positive reason given, but "felt bad" about not cooperating, i.e. no reason for not cooperating	10
Total	= 70

Refusals

"Leave well alone" - parent reported that children were well-adjusted and that they were loathe to disturb the status quo	14
Parent unwilling to tolerate intrusion into "personal affairs"	10
Parent promised to contact after "thinking it over" and failed to do so	5
Parent stated that children had had "enough of psychologists" - that is, they had received treatment as a result of divorce-related problems	4
Children unwilling to cooperate, although parent would be willing	4
"Too busy" - parent resistant to giving up time required for participation	3
"Let sleeping dogs lie" - parent wanted to "forget the past"	3
Incorrect tracing - person not divorced!	2
Death of non-custodial parent	2
Death of custodial parent	1
Custodial parent in throes of second divorce	1
Child living in another city	1
Total	= 50

PILOT STUDY METHODOLOGY:ACCEPTANCES AND REFUSALS TO PARTICIPATEPilot group A

Twelve letters were sent: six to mothers and six to fathers. Three mothers and three fathers had been awarded custody of children under 5 years of age, and three mothers and three fathers had been awarded custody of children older than 5 years. Of these 12 parents, five agreed to take part in the study.

Analysis of response to letterMothers granted custody of children under five at time of divorce (N = 3)

Two mothers in this group reported that their children were very happy and that they would rather "leave well alone." One mother agreed to co-operate; it transpired that she was experiencing marked difficulty with her children, and had been on the point of seeking professional help.

Mothers granted custody of children over five at time of divorce (N = 3)

One refused on the grounds that the child had already received treatment and that they had had "enough dealings with psychologists"; one was out of town; one agreed to co-operate.

Fathers granted custody of children under five at time of divorce (N = 3)

One father had remarried his ex-wife! Two fathers refused to co-operate, one saying that he'd rather "leave well alone"; the other expressed reluctance to discuss his "private affairs."

Fathers granted custody of children over five at time of divorce (N = 3)

All three fathers in this group agreed to co-operate. One in particular expressed his keenness to participate, saying that his child had had many problems arising out of the divorce.

Pilot group A was thus made up of two mothers and three fathers. Number of children involved was seven (4 boys and 3 girls) ranging in age from 10 to 20 years.

Pilot group B

A further 12 letters were sent, this time irrespective of child's age at the time of the divorce. Seven mothers and two fathers agreed to participate. One mother later withdrew; only four of the remaining mothers were seen, the other two forming part of the main study.

APPENDIX 8

INTERVIEW WITH CUSTODIAL PARENT

Name:

Present family constellation:

(i.e. in custodial home)

Whereabouts of ex-spouse:

Family constellation in non-custodial home:

Dates of remarriage:

Custodial parent:

Non-custodial parent:

Age of C/Cs at time of divorce:

Age of C/Cs at time of separation:

Divorce agreement:

(arrangements regarding custody
and access)

Clear outline of actual amount of contact between child
and non-custodial parent:

To what extent was the divorce preceded by arguments, with
or without litigation?

(Parents asked to describe the pre-divorce marital
relationship)

Outline of post-divorce, as well as present relationship to ex-spouse

(e.g. hostile, no contact, or maintain "friendly" relationship)

How have access arrangements worked?

Outline of problems associated with access

Parent-child relationship:

Parent asked to describe the child, and the nature of the parent-child relationship (e.g. is it a close relationship, do they communicate, is there friction?)

Outline of child's scholastic career:

Description of child's social relationships

How did parent explain the divorce to child?

Did parent have difficulty in coping with C's questions?

To what extent did/does parent experience problems as a single parent? (i.e. in child-rearing)

Parent asked to state to what extent he/she considers that child has had problems as a result of the divorce:

Parent's assessment of child's problems at time of divorce,
in post-divorce period, and at present time:

Has it been necessary to refer child for psychological assistance?

Were psychologists, psychiatrists, etc. consulted at time of
divorce, or post-divorce?

Would parent have welcomed counselling around the time of the divorce?

To what extent does parent perceive this as a useful concept?

Outline of parent's present occupation:

Parent's attitude to above:

Statement regarding parent's social life:

Parent's adjustment to marital status:
(i.e. whether single, remarried
and feelings regarding this)

Relationship between new spouse and child/children:

Did parent move to new home after the divorce?

To what extent was there a change in financial status?

On what basis was custody awarded to parent?

Parent's spontaneous comments and/or questions:

APPENDIX 9

PARENT'S ADJUSTMENT LEVEL

1	Relationship to ex-spouse	0	1	2
2	Relationship to child	0	1	2
3	Adjustment to new family or new way of life	0	1	2
4	Work relationships and adjustment	0	1	2
5	Presenting image; self-concept	0	1	2
6	Parent-child communication	0	1	2

Convert to 5 point rating scale:

4	11 - 12
3	9 - 10
2	6 - 8
1	3 - 5
0	0 - 2

CRITERIA FOR RATING1. Relationship to ex-spouse

- 0 Working relationship, co-operate with each other with regard to arrangements for child;
- 1 Some conflicts but no extreme problems;
- 2 Marked difficulties, bitterness, total refusal to communicate.

2. Relationship to child

- 0 Warmth in parent-child (P/C) relationship; intrinsic valuation of C;
- 1 Fair P/C relationship; some areas of conflict;
- 2 Loss of control of C, resulting in referral for psychological assistance, or in sending C to boarding school.

3. Adjustment to new spouse, family, way of life

- 0 Appears well-adjusted in new circumstances, presents as relaxed; describes good family relationships;
- 1 Has adjusted to some extent, but may have some areas of difficulty, e.g. with step-children, or lonely at times;
- 2 Appears lost, unhappy, overwhelmed by circumstances, depressed, unable to cope; in psychotherapy.

4. Occupational satisfaction

- 0 Finds job satisfying, has good work relationships, or is quite happy being unemployed;
- 1 Would like to change jobs, not altogether satisfied, some problems in relation to colleagues;
- 2 Actively thinking of a change: either to a new job, or thinking of starting a job because lonely or lost without it.

5. Presenting image; self-concept

- 0 Confident, happy, optimistic, well-adjusted;
- 1 Tense, unsure of her/himself;
- 2 Decidedly anxious, disturbed, maladjusted; in treatment.

6. Parent-child communication (based largely on how parent has explained divorce to child)

- 0 Openly and freely discussed;
- 1 Minimally discussed;
- 2 Never discussed.

APPENDIX 10

INTERVIEW I WITH CHILD:Question guide for Interviewer

Name:

Age:

Occupation:

If scholar or student:

Standard reached at school/college:

Attitude to school/college:

Relationship to teachers, lecturers:

If in employment:

Attitude to present employment: (e.g. happy, satisfied, dissatisfied, etc.)

C is asked to describe the main things he likes/dislikes about present placement, be it school, college or employment.

Reasons why C selected this job:
(e.g. influence of family, friends, etc.)

Relationship to co-workers:

Relationship to employer:

C asked to describe positive and negative attributes of teachers, lecturers, employer.

Employment history:

Scholastic history:

College history:

Peer relationships:

Does C have many friends?

Close, or casual?

Same sex?

Opposite sex?

How important are friends in C's life?

Does C look forward to meeting new people,
inviting them to his home?

Club memberships?

Would C like to have more friends?

Does C keep up correspondence with friends?

Sex-role functioning:

Brief outline of dating behaviour, if applicable:

Does C have a "steady"?

Ideas re. marriage and having a family:

If applicable, C asked to describe the most enjoyable aspects
of being a wife/mother, husband/father.

What are the negative aspects of the above?

C asked to name advantages and disadvantages of male and
female roles.

Ambitions, level of aspiration:

C asked to list important hopes and goals in his life

Is a sense of accomplishment important for C?

Does C have a feeling of guilt about not doing more
with his life?

Statement of interests and activities, hobbies:

How does C occupy himself in his spare time?

Family relationships:

Relationship with siblings:

Relationship with extended family members
e.g. aunts, grandparents:
(Details re. relationship with parents
obtained in Interview II)

Self-concept:

C is asked to describe things about himself with which he is most dissatisfied

What are the things he likes most about himself?

In what way would he like to improve his personality?

C is asked to give an outline of his life since leaving school or college - if applicable.

What does he consider the ideal occupation for himself?

Independence:

How does C cope with difficult decisions?

To whom would he go to discuss a problem?

How often does he discuss his problems with people
e.g. parents, friends?

Does he accept whatever people tell him, or would he argue back and express his own opinion?

When away from his family, does C feel homesick?

To what degree?

Optimism/Pessimism:

Is C looking forward to anything in the future? Is he confident it will happen?

Do things usually work out well for C?

How does C feel about the future in general?

What does C look forward to?

Does C worry a great deal?

Is C hopeful, or does he/she tend to dwell on negative possibilities?

APPENDIX 11

INTERVIEW II WITH CHILD

Present family constellation:

Whereabouts of both parents:

Age at divorce:

What does C remember about the divorce?

What does C remember about homelife prior to the divorce?

How was the divorce explained to C?

Was this explanation satisfactory to C?

Were C's questions openly and satisfactorily dealt with by his parents?

What contact has C had with non-custodial parent since the divorce?

How does he feel about this?

Statement from C regarding access arrangements - as applying at present time, as well as at time of the divorce:
(Child's perception of degree of permitted access as well as statement regarding actual amount of time spent with non-custodial parent)

How does C feel re. these arrangements?
(i.e. were visits regarded as pleasurable and positive, or were they a disruption, or nuisance?)

What problems did C experience in relation to access?

What would C's choice have been re. access arrangements?

Did C have sufficient contact with non-custodial parent?

Did C have any say as to parent he wanted to live with?

Which parent would he have chosen had he had the choice?

C is asked to describe present relationship with each parent

C is asked to describe each parent in terms of closeness, affection, and as disciplinarian

C is asked to describe strengths and weaknesses of both mother and father

Does C feel any particular loyalty to either parent?

If so, why?

Relationship with siblings (if not covered in Interview I)
Did presence of siblings help C in adjusting to the divorce?

In cases of split custody: how does C perceive this?

Does he regard it as a rejection?

What is more important to C - to be with siblings or to be with a particular parent?

In cases of re-marriage - C's feelings vis-à-vis step-parents and step-siblings

(is step-parent seen as a threat to his relationship with his own parent?

does C blame step-parent for break-up in parents' marriage?)

Has C ever blamed himself or felt in any way responsible for the break-up of parents' marriage?

Which parental behaviours does (or did) C find distressing?

Statement from C of extent to which he feels he has actively suffered as a result of the divorce

Statement from C of problems he has experienced in relation to the divorce, and specifically in relation to custody and access

Given the choice, would C have preferred to have had parents living together in disharmony rather than divorce?

Should parents stay together for the sake of the children?

Has C ever needed to discuss these matters with anybody?

Has C expressed this need to parents?

If so, how was it received?

If not, why not? (e.g. fear of hurting parents,
fear of evoking anger?)

Would C have welcomed counselling around time of the divorce?

Did the divorce affect C's desire to marry?

What are C's plans for the future - special reference to marriage/ having family (if not covered in Interview I)

C's spontaneous comments or suggestions regarding divorce, and this research

APPENDIX 12

CLINICAL ASSESSMENT OF CHILD

- 1 Presents as exceptionally well-adjusted, mature (age appropriate) without any apparent problems.
- 2 Well-adjusted, makes positive general impression, but not exceptionally so, as in (1).
- 3 Some suggestion of anxiety, maladjustment in one or more specific areas, although on the whole adequately adjusted.
- 4 Definite signs of maladjustment and not coping in several areas.
- 5 Presents as decidedly maladjusted, disturbed, unable to relate, markedly anxious.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.
Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like _____

2. The happiest time _____

3. I want to know _____

4. I regret _____

5. Boys _____

6. A mother _____

7. I feel _____

8. I can't _____

9. I suffer _____

10. The future _____

11. I need _____

12. Marriage _____

13. Sometimes _____

14. I hate _____

15. I am very _____

16. The only trouble _____

17. I wish _____

18. My father _____

19. My greatest worry is _____

20. Most girls _____

APPENDIX 14

SCORING CRITERIA FOR EIGHT VARIABLES
MAKING UP MEASURE OF GENERAL ADJUSTMENT

(i) WARMTH vs. CONFLICT IN RELATIONSHIP TO FAMILY MEMBERS

- 1 Well-adjusted; good warm contact with all family members; family seen as nurturant.
- 2 Overall relationships with family positive, in spite of occasional conflicts of mild nature.
- 3 Stress situations in relation to certain members of family, but child able to cope - not seen as serious problem.
- 4 Conflicts posing a problem or threat to child; causing anxiety and unhappiness.
- 5 Severe problems in relating to or accepting members of family, disturbing child's life.

(ii) HIGH vs. LOW ABILITY TO FUNCTION INDEPENDENTLY

- 1 Functions autonomously, yet able to accept normal interpersonal relationships of give and take. Does not doubt ability to function independently, and therefore does not have strong need to exert independence. Awareness and acceptance of dependency in some areas.
- 2 For most part independent, but seeks confirmation and/or assistance from others in certain areas.
- 3 Striving awareness towards independence but still dependent in several areas. Alternates between dependent and independent behaviour.
- 4 Dependent, difficulty in making decisions; needs much support. Always seeking advice or approval.
- 5 Does not function autonomously at all. Leans heavily on others. Unable to form own opinions and make decisions. Unable to cope without a great deal of support.

(v) HIGH vs. LOW SELF-CONCEPT

- 1 Confident, positive self-appraisal. No expressed areas of self-doubt or conflict.
- 2 Basically positive self-evaluation, but one particular area of doubt or sensitivity.
- 3 Expressed mild dissatisfaction with self, anxiety, lack of coping in certain situations, but in general copes reasonably well.
- 4 Markedly lacking in confidence. Expressed feelings of inadequacy with regard to several areas of functioning. Perceives self as inadequate, shy, or bad.
- 5 Strong feelings of generalised inadequacy in all roles.

(vi) OPTIMISTIC vs. PESSIMISTIC*

- 1 Forward-looking, positive, happy about, and full of hope for the future.
- 2 Positive approach to the future, but with awareness of possible limits.
- 3 Some doubts expressed; not altogether happy regarding the future. Aware of negative possibilities, but nevertheless remains hopeful.
- 4 Tends to dwell on negative possibilities. A worrier, pessimistic, unhappy about the future.
- 5 Extremely pessimistic. Sense of hopelessness. Depressed.

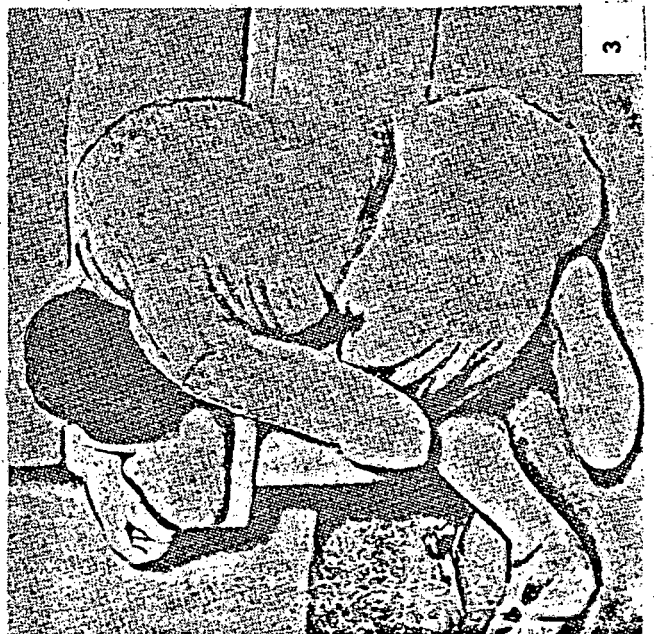
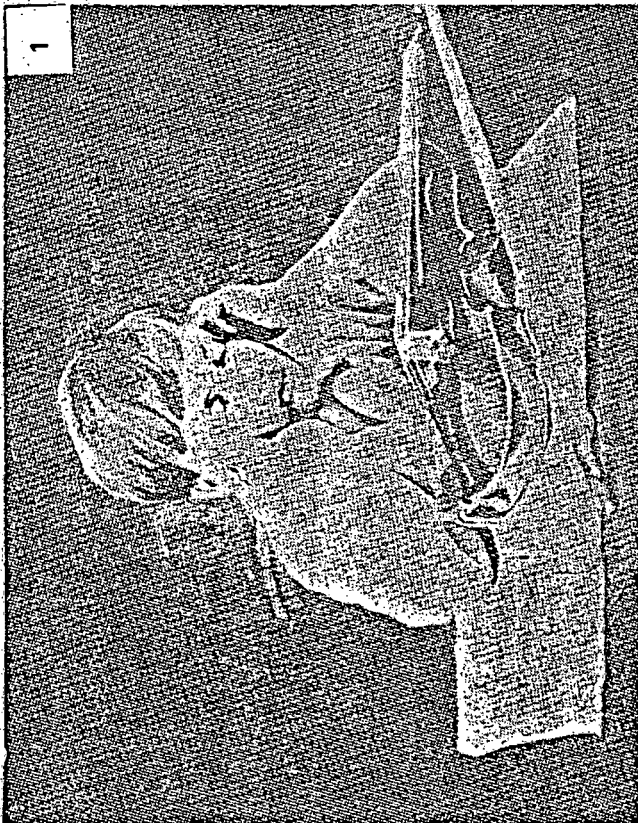
* In rating this variable it is important to be aware of situational determinants. It is also necessary to distinguish between realistic reaction to external circumstances, e.g. political situation, which might justify a certain measure of depression, and C's attitude toward his own particular future.

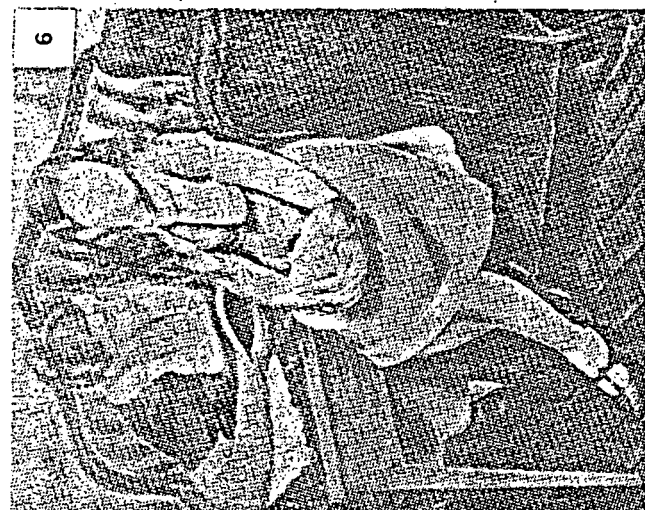
(vii) COPING vs. NON-COPING IN OCCUPATIONAL ROLE (includes job/college/school)

- 1 Definite commitment to job, loyalty to job or school; positive involvement in employment, or course of study. Enjoys or "loves" work - or states that it is extremely satisfying and fulfilling.
- 2 Positive attitude toward work/school. Actively participates in and enjoys school/work activities, but without the element of commitment or loyalty to a specific job or school. Striving toward occupational fulfillment.
- 3 Copes adequately, although not entirely satisfied with present work arrangement. Would consider a change although not actively seeking this. Present placement seen as stepping-stone; not fulfilling. Acceptance of status quo.
- 4 Actively unhappy in present situation. Considering a change. Would like to be doing something different.
- 5 Extremely dissatisfied and unhappy in present occupational placement. Can't find "right" placement. Has had many changes of jobs/schools. Has run many changes of jobs/schools. Has run away from school or walked out in jobs. Incapable of organising a satisfactory work role.

(viii) MATURE vs. IMMATURE SEX-ROLE FUNCTIONING

- 1 Complete acceptance of gender identity. Adequate in married role or in heterosexual behaviour.
- 2 Definite heterosexual activity, although some mild conflicts in relation to own sex-role. Hopes to "go steady" or get married one day.
- 3 Uncertainty regarding role in relation to opposite sex. No real contact as yet - or just starting to establish contact. Shy with opposite sex. Undecided about desirability of marriage.
- 4 Problem with regard to sex-role identity. Expressed denial or fear in relation to marriage, forming permanent heterosexual relationships, or having children.
- 5 Denial of own sexuality. No heterosexual relationships, e.g. total immersion in intellectual or religious pursuit, as a defence. Unconscious or latent homosexual traits.





APPENDIX 16

TAT CONFLICT SCORE:WAY IN WHICH CHILD COPES WITHANXIETY AND CONFLICT IN TAT STORIES

1. Absence, or only slight evidence of conflicts, with realism, as opposed to denial. Stories end on optimistic, yet realistic note. No apparent restrictive ego-defenses.
2. Hero not entirely adequate, but copes fairly well on the whole. Some escape into fantasy; some areas of conflict. Stories lack well-rounded endings, as in (1).
3. Marked anxiety and unresolved conflicts pervade stories. Endings mostly gloomy. Denial used primarily as defense mechanism. Much descriptive detail. Gives many alternatives.
4. Totally unable to cope with conflicts. Hero is filled with despair and/or unresolved aggression. Extreme denial and projection; distortions.

APPENDIX 17

INTERPARENTAL TURBULENCE:SCORING CRITERIA

- 0 Parental relationship during the marriage was not characterised by overt hostility and discord. Parents have maintained a "friendly" relationship subsequent to the divorce. Parents still go together on occasional family outings; non-custodial parent "baby-sits" for ex-spouse; both parents feel comfortable when non-custodial parent visits custodial home.
- 1 Similar to (0) above in that the pre-divorce marital relationship was not "turbulent". Parents, although not on "friendly" terms, are able to co-operate reasonably well regarding arrangements for the children.
- 2 A certain amount of hostility and discord in parental relationship during the marriage, and persisting after the divorce. In spite of this, however, a certain level of co-operation is still possible between the ex-spouse, i.e. with regard to the children.
- 3 Considerable interparental hostility. Relationship between parents characterised by turmoil. Marked difficulties in co-operating with each other subsequent to the divorce.
- 4 Open warfare/hostility, before, during and after the divorce. Total refusal or inability of parents to have any contact at all with each other, without explosive repercussions.

APPENDIX 18

CHILD'S PERCEPTION OF
ACCESS-RELATED PROBLEMS

- 0 Access arrangements presented child with no problems.
- 1 Occasional tensions associated with access, but on the whole not perceived as serious.
- 2 Evidence of conflict in relation to access, e.g. awareness of parental attitudes in this regard; sense of divided loyalties, interference with social/sporting activities.
- 3 Unhappy with access arrangements; would prefer a different type of access pattern.
- 4 Extremely unhappy with regard to access arrangements; pressing for change in existing arrangements.

CHILD'S PERCEPTION OF
DIVORCE-RELATED PROBLEMS*

- 0 Child considers that he has suffered no ill-effects as a result of the divorce-experience.
- 1 Although not able to pin-point specific divorce-associated problems, there is a suggestion or query as to whether he/she may have been affected in a mild way.
- 2 Acknowledgement of intermittent feelings of unhappiness, conflicts, wishing for reunion of parents, regarding himself as "different" from peers, mention of specific problems experienced as a result of the divorce.
- 3 Definite awareness of unhappiness and malfunctioning as a result of the divorce.
- 4 Severe emotional problems, e.g. depression, necessitating referral for treatment.

* Rated for time of divorce as well as for time of examination

APPENDIX 20

PARENT'S ACCESS-RELATED PROBLEMS

- 0 Access arrangements presented parent with no undue problems.
- 1 Intermittent difficulties experienced, but access not on the whole perceived as a conflict situation.
- 2 Parent experienced some tension and anxiety in relation to access - e.g. deterioration in child's behaviour following visits, difficulty in re-instating discipline.
- 3 Child presenting with behavioural and/or emotional disturbances which parent attributes directly to access arrangements.
- 4 Severe access-related problems, necessitating legal consultations and/or seeking psychological assistance.

APPENDIX 21

PARENT'S PERCEPTION OF
CHILD'S DIVORCE-RELATED PROBLEMS *

- 0 Parent considers child to be well-adjusted, and to have suffered no ill-effects as a result of the divorce.
- 1 Parent queries whether child has been affected by the divorce, although there is no overt evidence of this.
- 2 Some conflicts evident in child, as manifested by fall-off in scholastic performance, withdrawal, or acting-out behaviour, psychosomatic symptoms, insomnia, etc., which parent relates to the divorce experience.
- 3 Child presenting with definite signs of maladjustment, impairing general functioning. Marked manifestation of symptoms described in (2) above.
- 4 Severe behavioural and/or emotional problems, necessitating referral for help.

* Rated for time of divorce as well as for time of examination

APPENDIX 22

PARENT'S PERCEPTION OF PROBLEMSAS A SINGLE PARENT

- 0 No difficulties other than would be expected in a two-parent household.
- 1 Some rough passages, occasional difficulties; largely concerned with financial issues.
- 2 Several difficulties - many areas of concern regarding child's behaviour and reactions.
- 3 Considerable problems; parent at times wished he/she had had guidance* but did not actually seek this.
- 4 Extreme difficulties. Psychological assistance sought; parent felt at a loss; unable to cope.

* The implication of this is not that seeking advice is synonymous with inability to cope. At times seeking advice, particularly in a preventative way, is regarded as a sign of foresight and maturity. As it occurs here, this refers to the parent who actively feels that he is losing his grip of a situation.

APPENDIX 23

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTIONAL VARIABLES:SCORING CRITERIA(i) PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION *

- 0 Free and open communication. Parent has explained reasons for the divorce fully, and child feels free to broach the subject, and to ask any questions in this and any other connection.
- 1 Fairly good communication. Although reasons were given for the divorce, there has not been subsequent discussion in this regard. Child is left with some unanswered questions.
- 2 Minimal communication. Child does not feel free to initiate discussion of the divorce. Parent not certain how to broach the subject, or has not considered it necessary to give the child a satisfactory explanation.
- 3 Poor communication. No explanations given by parent regarding the divorce; no questions asked by child.

* This was rated separately for parent and child.

(ii) PARENT-CHILD BOND

- 0 Warm, close bond between custodial parent and child. Evidence of meaningful attachment without being over-dependent on each other. Affection evident in the manner in which they describe each other and their relationship. Parent values child intrinsically. Able to relate to each other and understand each other.
- 1 Some warmth in parent-child relationship, but evidence of more than transient conflict between them. The relationship lacks the depth of closeness and understanding of (0) above.
- 2 Marked conflicts in parent-child relationship. Evidence of rejection. Difficulty in "getting through" to, and understanding each other. No spontaneous warmth and affection evident from the manner in which they describe each other.

INTRODUCTION TO PRESENTATION OF RAW DATA

Appendix 25 and 26 contain all ratings for the sample and control group respectively.

Appendix 27 to 36 contain details of computer print-out (P/O) for all findings and relationships reported in Chapter 5, as well as in the other parts of this thesis. Appendixes 27 to 36 will each be preceded by an index listing the print-outs therein contained.

It should be noted that in rating all variables, the lowest score corresponds with the "best" rating. Thus, in considering adjustment, the lower the score, the better the adjustment; similarly, in rating turbulence, parent-child bond, parent-child communication, for example, ratings of 0 refer to lowest turbulence, best bond and most meaningful communication, respectively.

Although the sample was made up of 92 children, in certain instances the total will be seen to be less than 92. The explanation for this is as follows:

It was not always possible to rate all the children for turbulence and for bond with the non-custodial parent. Non-rating of these variables included, for example, those instances where the non-custodial parent had left the family when the child was an infant. Ratings for turbulence were thus obtained for 82 children and bond with the non-custodial parent was rated for 88 children. Ratings for parent's perception of problems as a single parent were obtained for 91 children.

APPENDIX 25

INDEX TO COLUMN HEADINGS FOR RAW DATAColumn no.

1	Number of subject
2	Age
3	Variables rated on interview
4	Variables rated on ISB
5	Variables rated on TAT
6	TAT Conflict score
7	Sex
8	Age at divorce
9	Sex of custodial parent
10	Siblings
11	Remarriage, custodial parent
12	Remarriage, non-custodial parent
13	Step-siblings, custodial family
14	Half-siblings, custodial family
15	Step-siblings, non-custodial family
16	Half-siblings, non-custodial family
17	Access frequency
18	Free access
19	Custody contested
20	Court decree, "Reasonable access"
21	Adjustment score
22	Turbulence
23	Clinical assessment
24	Adjustment of parent
25	Parent-child communication (parent's view)
26	Parent-child communication (child's view)
27	Parent-child communication (composite score)
28	Parent's perception of access problems
29	Child's perception of access problems
30	Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (now)
31	Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (then)
32	Child's perception of divorce-related problems (now)
33	Child's perception of divorce-related problems (then)
34	Parent's problems as single parent
35	Bond with custodial parent
36	Bond with non-custodial parent
37	Financial status
38	Move to new home

[illegible]

APPENDIX 26

RAW DATA

Control group

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	22	21132221	1214123	22 223222	12			16,6
2	26	23333424	2324334	32 233 21	13			25,8
3	12	4323223	333323	4345444 3	03			23,6
4	24	11313341	21423441	22 323421	03			22,3
5	28	32342231	3235331	443543423	13			24,5
6	16	12112222	13223332	22 233231	12			17,6
7	13	2223112	1223223	3344333 2	02			17,0
8	12	2211113	222111	222323 2	01			14,3
9	14	2222333	3232323	3242333 2	03			22,1
10	11	2322323	2323233	33 4344 2	13			21,8
11	17	11212132	22213333	323333331	11			17,2
12	17	22313224	11312234	333132341	13			18,9
13	14	3343322	2342324	434334 3	13			24,9
14	16	11111232	12212332	343333421	11			15,0
15	25	11112211	11113413	31 224212	01			13,7
16	24	21342221	1224121	213423322	02			18,5
17	9	3443433	2333333	334344 2	13			27,7
18	20	21111222	122223 2	21 123221	11			15,5
19	20	31122331	311323 1	411123221	02			18,9
20	23	43324233	42434324	43 445 43	04			27,8
21	21	21112331	12213331	434434431	02			17,4
22	11	3333334	2233224	434224 3	13			24,9
23	22	11131122	22323232	313322 22	11			16,5
24	16	22122332	222321 2	433324322	12			18,8
25	20	13133241	12122241	13 433311	13			19,0
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Index to column headings

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Number of subject | 6 | TAT Conflict score |
| 2 | Age | 7 | Sex |
| 3 | Variables rated on interview | 8 | Clinical assessment |
| 4 | Variables rated on ISB | 9 | Adjustment score |
| 5 | Variables rated on TAT | | |

APPENDIX 27

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:SEX OF CUSTODIAL PARENT, SEX OF CHILD,AGE AT DIVORCE, AND CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Sex of custodial parent and adjustment		
All children	1]	406
Boys	2]	
Girls	3]	
Sex of child and adjustment		
Father custody	4]	407
Mother custody	5]	
All children	6]	
Age at divorce and adjustment		
Father custody	7]	408
Mother custody	8]	
All children	9]	
Sex of custodial parent and age at divorce	10]	409
Sex of custodial parent and sex of child	11]	

Rows: Sex of custodial parent

Columns: Adjustment (lowest scores = best adjustment)

P/O 1 All children

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Father	7	14	6	6	4	4	41
Mother	11	11	8	6	10	5	51
Total	18	25	14	12	14	9	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,84 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,84$) = 0,8702

P/O 2 Boys

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Father	4	10	1	2	2	2	21
Mother	7	4	2	3	5	3	24
Total	11	14	3	5	7	5	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 3,01 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,01$) = 0,6985

P/O 3 Girls

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Father	3	4	5	4	2	2	20
Mother	4	7	6	3	5	2	27
Total	7	11	11	7	7	4	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,30 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,30$) = 0,9976

Rows: Sex of child

Columns: Adjustment (lowest scores = best adjustment)

P/O 4 Father custody

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Boys	4	10	1	2	2	2	21
Girls	3	4	5	4	2	2	20
Total	7	14	6	6	4	4	41

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 3,42 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,42$) = 0,6354

P/O 5 Mother custody

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Boys	7	4	2	3	5	3	24
Girls	4	7	6	3	5	2	27
Total	11	11	8	6	10	5	51

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,17 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,17$) = 0,9474

P/O 6 All children

	11 to 15	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
Boys	11	14	3	5	7	5	45
Girls	7	11	11	7	7	4	47
Total	18	25	14	12	14	9	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 4,15 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 4,15$) = 0,5278

Rows: Age at divorce

Columns: Adjustment (lowest score = best adjustment)

P/O 7 Father custody

	15 and less	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
0 to 6-11	4	8	0	1	1	1	15
7-0 and above	3	6	6	5	3	3	26
Total	17	14	6	6	4	4	41

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 4,70 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 4,70$) = 0,4542

P/O 8 Mother custody

	15 and less	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
0 to 6-11	4	5	2	4	4	4	23
7-0 and above	7	6	6	2	6	1	28
Total	11	11	8	6	10	5	51

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 2,37 with 5 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,37$) = 0,7953

P/O 9 All children

	15 and less	16 to 18	19 to 20	21 to 22	23 to 27	Over 27	Total
0 to 2-11	2	4	0	2	3	1	12
3-0 to 6-11	6	9	2	3	2	4	26
7-0 to 12-11	8	8	10	5	8	3	42
13 and older	2	4	2	2	1	1	12
Total	18	25	14	12	14	9	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 5,60 with 15 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 5,60$) = 0,9857

P/O 10

Rows: Age at divorce

Columns: Sex of custodial parent

	Father	Mother	Total
0 to 2-11	3	9	12
3-0 to 6-11	12	14	26
Over 7 years	26	28	54
Total	41	51	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 2,17 with 2 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,17$) = 0,3772

P/O 11

Rows: Sex of custodial parent

Columns: Sex of child

	Boys	Girls	Total
Fathers	21	20	41
Mothers	24	27	51
Total	45	47	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 0,03 with 1 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,03$) = 0,8517

APPENDIX 28

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEX OF CUSTODIAL PARENT
AND SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Print-Out no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Adjustment of parent	1	411
Move to new home	2	
Change in financial status	3	

P/O 1

Rows: Sex of custodial parent

Columns: Adjustment of parent

	Good 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Father	10	10	2	22
Mother	11	11	7	29
Total	21	21	9	51

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,94 with 2 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,94$) = 0,6246

P/O 2

Rows: Sex of custodial parent

Columns: Move to new home

	Same home	Moved	Total
Father	17	5	22
Mother	14	15	29
Total	31	20	51

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,28 with 1 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,28$) = 0,0701

P/O 3

Rows: Sex of custodial parent

Columns: Change in financial status

	Same	Changed	Total
Father	21	1	22
Mother	8	21	29
Total	29	22	51

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 20,81 with 1 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 20,81$) = 0,0000

APPENDIX 29

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCESS FREQUENCYAND SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Print-out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Adjustment		
All children	1	413
Boys	2	
Girls	3	
Bond with custodial parent	4	414
Bond with non-custodial parent	5	
Turbulence		
All children	6	415
Boys	7	
Girls	8	
Child's perception of divorce-related problems (now)	9	416
Child's perception of divorce-related problems (then)	10	
Child's perception of access-related problems	11	417
Age of child at divorce	12	
Sex of custodial parent	13	

Rows: Adjustment score

Columns: Access frequency

P/O 1 All children

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	4	17	15	13	49
Poor adj. Over 19	5	16	16	6	43
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,37 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,37$) = 0,7127

P/O 2 Boys

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	3	7	9	6	25
Poor adj. Over 19	3	11	4	2	20
Total	6	18	13	8	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 3,06 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,06$) = 0,3778

P/O 3 Girls

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	1	10	6	7	24
Poor Adj. Over 19	2	5	12	4	23
Total	3	15	18	11	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 2,80 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,80$) = 0,4236

P/O 4

Rows: Bond with custodial parent

Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Warm bond 0	7	21	22	16	66
Fair bond 1	1	10	9	3	23
Poor bond 2	1	2	0	0	3
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,89 with 6 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,89$) = 0,9295

P/O 5

Rows: Bond with non-custodial parent

Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Warm bond 0	1	13	11	10	35
Fair bond 1	0	8	18	8	34
Poor bond 2	4	12	2	1	19
Total	5	33	31	19	88

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 18,09 with 6 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 18,09$) = 0,0060

Rows: Turbulence
Columns: Access frequency

P/O 6 All children

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	0	15	17	18	50
High turb. 3, 4	2	15	14	1	32
Total	2	30	31	19	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 10,16 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 10,16$) = 0,0171

P/O 7 Boys

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	0	7	10	7	24
High turb. 3, 4	2	9	3	1	15
Total	2	16	13	8	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 4,63 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 4,63$) = 0,2013

P/O 8 Girls

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	0	8	7	11	26
High turb. 3, 4	0	6	11	0	17
Total	0	14	18	11	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,29 with 2 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,29$) = 0,0158

P/O 9

Rows: Child's perception of divorce-related problems (now) (Lowest score = least problems)

Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
0	3	15	14	17	49
1	5	8	5	1	19
2, 3, 4	1	10	12	1	24
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 14,56 with 6 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 14,56$) = 0,0240

P/O 10

Rows: Child's perception of divorce-related problems (then)

Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
0	2	11	6	15	34
1	3	5	6	2	16
2, 3, 4	4	17	19	2	42
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 16,99 with 6 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 16,99$) = 0,0093

P/O 11 Rows: Child's perception of access-related problems (lowest score = least problems)
 Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
0	5	13	15	15	48
1	0	2	3	3	8
2, 3, 4	4	18	13	1	36
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 9,92 with 6 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 9,92$) = 0,1282

P/O 12 Rows: Age at divorce
 Columns: Access frequency

	None	Occasional	Regular	Frequent	Total
0 to 2-11	3	7	2	0	12
3-0 to 6-11	3	6	13	4	26
7-0 to 12-11	2	16	14	10	42
13 and above	1	4	2	5	12
Total	9	33	31	19	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,71 with 9 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,71$) = 0,4642

P/O 13 Rows: Access frequency
 Columns: Sex of custodial parent

	Father	Mother	Total
None	2	7	9
Occasional	18	15	33
Regular	12	19	31
Frequent	9	10	19
Total	41	51	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 2,21 with 3 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,21$) = 0,5300

APPENDIX 30

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FREE ACCESSAND SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variables</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Adjustment		
All	1	419
Boys	2	
Girls	3	
Bond with custodial parent (All)	4	
Bond with non-custodial parent (All)	5	
Turbulence		
All	6	420
Boys	7	
Girls	8	
Child's perception of problems now (All)	9	
Child's perception of problems then	10	421
Child's access-related problems	11	
Age of child at divorce	12	

Rows: Adjustment score

Columns: Free access

P/O 1

All children

	Not free	Free	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	25	24	49
Bad adj. Over 19	29	14	43
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 1,92 with 1 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,92$) = 0,1664

P/O 2

Boys

	Not free	Free	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	11	14	25
Bad adj. Over 19	15	5	20
Total	26	19	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,20 with 1 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,20$) = 0,0737

P/O 3

Girls

	Not free	Free	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	14	10	24
Bad adj. Over 19	14	9	23
Total	28	19	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 0,01 with 1 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,01$) = 0,9043

P/O 4

Rows: Bond with custodial parent

Columns: Free access (All)

	Not free	Free	Total
Warm bond 0	34	32	66
Fair bond 1	17	6	23
Poor bond 2	3	0	3
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 3,49 with 2 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,49$) = 0,1748

P/O 5

Rows: Bond with non-custodial parent

Columns: Free access (All)

	Not free	Free	Total
Warm bond 0	15	20	35
Fair bond 1	21	13	34
Poor bond 2	14	5	19
Total	50	38	88

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 = 5,32 with 2 df.

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 5,32$) = 0,0699

Rows: Turbulence
Columns: Free access

P/O 6

All children

	Not free	Free	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	17	33	50
High turb. 3, 4	27	5	32
Total	44	38	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 17,94 with 1 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 17,94$) = 0,0000

P/O 7

Boys

	Not free	Free	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	6	18	24
High turb. 3, 4	14	1	15
Total	20	19	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 14,63 with 1 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 14,63$) = 0,0001

P/O 8

Girls

	Not free	Free	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	11	15	26
High turb. 3, 4	13	4	17
Total	24	19	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,58 with 1 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,58$) = 0,0586

P/O 9

Rows: Child's perception of
problems (now) *
Columns: Free access (All children)

	Not free	Free	Total
0	19	30	49
1	16	3	19
2, 3, 4	19	5	24
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 = 17,27 with 2 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 17,27$) = 0,0002

P/O 10

Rows: Child's perception of
problems (then) *
Columns: Free access (All children)

	Not free	Free	Total
0	13	21	34
1	11	5	16
2, 3, 4	30	12	42
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 = 9,35 with 2 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 9,35$) = 0,0093

* lowest scores = least problems

P/O 11

Rows: Child's access-related problems (lowest scores = least problems)

Columns: Free access (All)

	Not free	Free	Total
0	21	27	48
1	2	6	8
2, 3, 4	31	5	36
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 16,37 with 2 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 16,37$) = 0,0003

P/O 12

Rows: Age at divorce

Columns: Free access

	Not free	Free	Total
0 to 2-11	11	1	12
3-0 to 6-11	20	6	26
7-0 to 12-11	18	24	42
13 and above	5	7	12
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 $\chi^2 = 11,49$ with 3 df.Prob. ($\chi^2 > 11,49$) = 0,0093

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TURBULENCEAND SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Adjustment		
All children	1	423
Boys	2	
Girls	3	
Bond with custodial parent		
All children	4	423
Boys	5	
Girls	6	
Bond with non-custodial parent		
All children	7	424
Boys	8	
Girls	9	
Child's perception of divorce-related problems (now)		
All children	10	424
Boys	11	
Girls	12	
Child's access problems		
All children	13	425
Boys	14	
Girls	15	
Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (now)		
All children	16	426
Boys	17	
Girls	18	
Parent's perception of child's problems at time of the divorce		
All children	19	426
Boys	20	
Girls	21	
Parent's problems as a single parent		
All children	22	427
Boys	23	
Girls	24	
Clinical Assessment		
All children	25	427
Boys	26	
Girls	27	

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 1 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	37	6	43
Poor adj. Over 19	13	26	39
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 21,72 with 1 df.
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 21,72$) = 0,0000
P/O 2 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	20	1	21
Poor adj. Over 19	4	14	18
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 18,86 with 1 df.
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 18,86$) = 0,0000
P/O 3 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	17	5	22
Poor adj. Over 19	9	12	21
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,98 with 1 df.
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,98$) = 0,0460

Rows: Bond with custodial parent

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 4 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	40	17	57
Fair bond 1	10	13	23
Poor bond 2	0	2	2
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 5,02
 with 2 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 5,02$) = 0,0814
P/O 5 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	19	7	26
Fair bond 1	5	7	12
Poor bond 2	0	1	1
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 2,32
 with 2 df.
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,32$) = 0,3131
P/O 6 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	21	10	31
Fair bond 1	5	6	11
Poor bond 2	0	1	1
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,97
 with 2 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,97$) = 0,6170

Rows: Bond with non-custodial parent

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 7 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	26	8	34
Fair bond 1	21	13	34
Poor bond 2	3	11	14
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 = 12,64 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 12,64) = 0,0018$$

P/O 8 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	14	4	18
Fair bond 1	8	4	12
Poor bond 2	2	7	9
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)}$$

$$= 5,72 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 5,72) = 0,0574$$

P/O 9 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	12	4	16
Fair bond 1	13	9	22
Poor bond 2	1	4	5
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)}$$

$$= 2,81 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 2,81) = 0,2450$$

Rows: Child's perception of divorce-related problems

(lowest scores = least problems)

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 10 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	37	7	44
1	5	9	14
2, 3, 4	8	16	24
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 = 21,34 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 21,34) = 0,0000$$

P/O 11 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	18	5	23
1	3	6	9
2, 3, 4	3	4	7
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)}$$

$$= 4,40 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 4,40) = 0,1107$$

P/O 12 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	19	2	21
1	2	3	5
2, 3, 4	5	12	17
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)}$$

$$= 12,56 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df.}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 12,56) = 0,0019$$

Rows: Child's access problems
(lowest scores = least problems)

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 13

All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	34	7	41
1	6	2	8
2, 3, 4	10	23	33
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 19,40 with 2 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 19,40$) = 0,0001

P/O 14

Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	15	5	20
1	3	0	3
2, 3, 4	6	10	16
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 4,57 with 2 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 4,57$) = 0,1016

P/O 15

Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	19	2	21
1	3	2	5
2, 3, 4	4	13	17
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 14,19 with 2 df.
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 14,19$) = 0,0006

Rows: Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (At time of examination) *

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 16 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	40	8	48
1	6	7	13
2, 3, 4	4	17	21
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 26,80
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 26,80$) = 0,0000

P/O 17 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	19	5	24
1	4	3	7
2, 3, 4	1	7	8
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,64
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,64$) = 0,0133

P/O 18 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	21	3	24
1	2	4	6
2, 3, 4	3	10	13
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 13,26
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 13,26$) = 0,0013

Rows: Parent's perception of child's problems at time of the divorce *

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 19 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	28	6	34
1	7	4	11
2, 3, 4	15	22	37
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 11,33
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 11,33$) = 0,0035

P/O 20 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	14	5	19
1	3	1	4
2, 3, 4	7	9	16
Total	24	15	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 2,18
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,18$) = 0,3359

P/O 21 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	14	1	15
1	4	3	7
2, 3, 4	8	13	21
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,98
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,98$) = 0,0112

Rows: Parent's problems as single parent
(lowest scores = least problems)

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 22 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	21	7	28
1	14	7	21
2, 3, 4	14	18	32
Total	49	32	81

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 6,55$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 6,55$) = 0,0377

P/O 23 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	12	4	16
1	6	5	11
2, 3, 4	5	6	11
Total	23	15	38

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,38
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,38$) = 0,5010

P/O 24 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
0	9	3	12
1	8	2	10
2, 3, 4	9	12	21
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 3,46
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,46$) = 0,1773

Rows: Clinical assessment
(lowest scores = best adjustment)

Columns: Turbulence

P/O 25 All children

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
1	12	2	14
2	26	2	28
3, 4, 5	12	28	40
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 31,69$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 31,69$) = 0,0000

P/O 26 Boys

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
1	6	0	6
2	13	1	14
3, 4, 5	5	14	19
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 15,38
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 15,38$) = 0,0005

P/O 27 Girls

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3, 4	Total
1	6	2	8
2	13	1	14
3, 4, 5	7	14	21
Total	26	17	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 10,48
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 10,48$) = 0,0053

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:CHILD'S ADJUSTMENT IN RELATIONTO SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Bond with custodial parent		
All children	1	
Boys	2	
Girls	3	
Bond with non-custodial parent		429
All children	4	
Boys	5	
Girls	6	
Child's perception of divorce-related problems (now)		
All children	7	430
Boys	8	
Girls	9	
Parent's adjustment		
All children	10	
Boys	11	
Girls	12	
Parent's remarriage		431
All children	13	
Boys	14	
Girls	15	
Move to new home		
All children	16	
Boys	17	
Girls	18	
Change in financial status		432
All children	19	
Boys	20	
Girls	21	
Presence of siblings		
All children	22	
Boys	23	
Girls	24	
Clinical assessment		433
All children	25	
Boys	26	
Girls	27	

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Bond with custodial parent

P/O 1 All children

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	39	9	1	49
Poor adj. Over 19	27	14	2	43
Total	66	23	3	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity corrections)} = 2,02$$

with 2 df

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 2,02) = 0,3650$$

P/O 2 Boys

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	20	4	1	25
Poor adj. Over 19	11	8	1	20
Total	31	12	2	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 2,26$$

with 2 df

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 2,26) = 0,3227$$

P/O 3 Girls

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	19	5	0	24
Poor adj. Over 19	16	6	1	23
Total	35	11	1	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 0,05$$

with 2 df

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 0,05) = 0,9751$$

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Bond with non-custodial parent

P/O 4 All children

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	19	20	9	48
Poor adj. Over 19	16	14	10	40
Total	35	34	19	88

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 = 0,65 \text{ with 2 df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 0,65) = 0,7237$$

P/O 5 Boys

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	12	8	4	24
Poor adj. Over 19	7	4	8	19
Total	19	12	12	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 3,45$$

with 2 df

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 3,45) = 0,1784$$

P/O 6 Girls

	Warm 0	Fair 1	Poor 2	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	7	12	5	24
Poor adj. Over 19	9	10	2	21
Total	16	22	7	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 0,61$$

with 2 df

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 0,61) = 0,7388$$

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Child's perception of divorce-related problems
(lowest scores = least problems)

P/O 7 All children

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	34	7	8	49
Poor adj. Over 19	15	12	16	43
Total	49	19	24	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 11,01$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 11,01$) = 0,0041

P/O 8 Boys

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	16	5	4	25
Poor adj. Over 19	9	8	3	20
Total	25	13	7	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,34 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,34$) = 0,5105

P/O 9 Girls

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	18	2	4	24
Poor adj. Over 19	6	4	13	23
Total	24	6	17	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,91 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,91$) = 0,0116

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Parent's adjustment
(lowest scores = best adjustment)

P/O 10 All children

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	26	20	3	49
Poor adj. Over 19	12	17	14	43
Total	38	37	17	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 = 12,18 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 12,18) = 0,0023$$

P/O 11 Boys

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	13	11	1	25
Poor adj. Over 19	6	7	7	20
Total	19	18	8	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 5,25 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 5,25) = 0,0724$$

P/O 12 Girls

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	13	9	2	24
Poor adj. Over 19	6	10	7	23
Total	19	19	9	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 3,61 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 3,61) = 0,1644$$

Rows: Adjustment

Columns: Remarriage, custodial parent

P/O 13 All children

	No	Yes	Divorced	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	38	10	1	49
Poor adj. Over 19	26	17	0	43
Total	64	27	1	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 2,97 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 2,97) = 0,2263$$

P/O 14 Boys

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	18	7	25
Poor adj. Over 19	12	8	20
Total	30	15	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (Yates method)} = 0,28 \text{ with } 1 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 0,28) = 0,5959$$

P/O 15 Girls

	No	Yes	Divorced	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	20	3	1	24
Poor adj. Over 19	14	9	0	23
Total	34	12	1	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$\chi^2 \text{ (with continuity correction)} = 2,84 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (\chi^2 > 2,84) = 0,2416$$

Rows: Adjustment
Columns: Move to new home

P/O 16 All children

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	34	15	49
Poor adj. Over 19	21	22	43
Total	55	37	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,21 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,21$) = 0,0730

P/O 17 Boys

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	14	9	25
Poor adj. Over 19	10	10	20
Total	26	19	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 0,41 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,41$) = 0,5214

P/O 18 Girls

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	18	6	24
Poor adj. Over 19	11	12	23
Total	29	18	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 2,61 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 2,61$) = 0,1062

Rows: Adjustment
Columns: Change in financial status

P/O 19 All children

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	33	16	49
Poor adj. Over 19	20	23	43
Total	53	39	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 3,26 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 3,26$) = 0,0709

P/O 20 Boys

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	18	7	25
Poor adj. Over 19	10	10	20
Total	28	17	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 1,45 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,45$) = 0,2289

P/O 21 Girls

	No	Yes	Total
Good adj. 19 and less	15	9	24
Poor adj. Over 19	10	13	23
Total	25	22	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (Yates method) = 1,03 with 1 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,03$) = 0,3106

Rows: Adjustment
Columns: Siblings

P/O 22 All children

	Only Child	One Sib	More than 1 sib	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	6	18	25	49
Poor adj. Over 19	4	18	21	43
Total	10	36	46	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,06
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,06$) = 0,9691

P/O 23 Boys

	Only Child	One Sib	More than 1 sib	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	3	8	14	25
Poor adj. Over 19	3	8	9	20
Total	6	16	23	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,05
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,05$) = 0,9370

P/O 24 Girls

	Only Child	One Sib	More than 1 sib	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	3	10	11	24
Poor adj. Over 19	1	10	12	23
Total	4	20	23	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,22
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,22$) = 0,8959

Rows: Clinical Assessment
(lowest scores = best adjustment)

Columns: Adjustment

P/O 25 All children

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
1	14	0	14
2	26	6	32
3, 4, 5	9	37	46
Total	49	43	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 43,34$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 43,34$) = 0,000

P/O 26 Boys

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
1	6	0	6
2	14	2	16
3, 4, 5	5	18	23
Total	24	20	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 17,88
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 17,88$) = 0,0001

P/O 27 Girls

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
1	8	0	8
2	12	4	16
3, 4, 5	4	19	23
Total	24	23	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 17,74
with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 17,74$) = 0,0001

APPENDIX 33

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:RELATIONSHIP OF ADJUSTMENT OF CUSTODIALPARENT TO SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Turbulence		
All children	1]	
Boys	2]	435
Girls	3]	
Parent-child communication	4]	
Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (now)	5]	436
Problems as a single parent	6]	
Free access	7]	
Parent's access problems	8]	437

Rows: Turbulence

Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent
(lowest score = best adjustment)

P/O 1 All

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	31	16	3	50
High turb. 3, 4	4	14	14	32
Total	35	30	17	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 25,35$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 25,35$) = 0,0000

P/O 2 Boys

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	15	8	1	24
High turb. 3, 4	2	6	7	15
Total	17	14	8	39

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 10,25 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 10,25$) = 0,0060

P/O 3 Girls

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Low turb. 0, 1, 2	16	8	2	26
High turb. 3, 4	1	9	7	17
Total	17	17	9	43

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 11,51 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 11,51$) = 0,0032

P/O 4 Rows: Parent-child communication (composite score)
 Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent (lowest scores = best adjustment)
 (All children)

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Good 0 & 1	22	14	1	37
Fair 2 & 3	5	7	1	13
Poor 4, 5, 6	11	16	15	42
Total	38	37	17	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 15,19 with 4 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 15,19$) = 0,0043

P/O 5 Rows: Parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (now)
 Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent
 (lowest scores = least problems)
 (" " = best adjustment)

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
0	36	14	4	54
1	1	9	5	15
2, 3, 4	2	13	8	23
Total	39	36	17	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 27,24 with 4 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 27,24$) = 0,0000

P/O 6 Rows: Problems as single parent
 Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent
 (lowest scores = least problems)
 (" " = best adjustment)

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
0	24	8	0	32
1	10	10	3	23
2, 3, 4	5	18	13	36
Total	39	36	16	91

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 26,26 with 4 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 26,26$) = 0,0000

P/O ? Rows: Adjustment, custodial parent
(lowest scores = best adjustment)
Columns: Free access (all children)

	Not free	Free	Total
0	15	23	38
1	25	12	37
2, 3, 4	14	3	17
Total	54	38	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$x^2 = 10,92 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$

$$\text{Prob. } (x^2 > 10,92) = 0,0043$$

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$$x^2 = 10,92 \text{ with } 2 \text{ df}$$
$$\text{Prob. } (x^2 > 10,92) = 0,0043$$

Prob. $(\chi^2 > 10,92) = 0,0043$

P/O 8 Rows: Parent's access problems
 Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent
 (lowest scores = least problems)
 (" " = best adjustment)

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
0	35	21	3	59
1	2	2	1	5
2, 3, 4	2	13	13	28
Total	39	36	17	92

Columns: Adjustment, custodial parent

(lowest scores = least problems)
(" " = best adjustment)

(" " = best adjustment)

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 26,72 with 4 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 26,72$) = 0,0000

Prob. $(\chi^2 > 26,72) = 0,0000$

APPENDIX 34

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:PARENT-CHILD BOND IN RELATIONTO SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Bond with custodial parent, and adjustment of parent	1]	439
Bond with custodial parent and parent-child communication	2]	
Bond with custodial parent and age at divorce	3]	440
Bond with non-custodial parent and age at divorce	4]	
Bond with custodial parent, and child's divorce-related problems (now)	5]	441
Bond with non-custodial parent, and child's divorce-related problems (now)	6]	
Bond with custodial parent, and parent's perception of child's divorce-related problems (now)	7]	

P/O 1

Rows: Bond with custodial parent

Columns: Adjustment of parent (lowest scores = best adjustment)

	0	1	2, 3, 4	Total
Warm bond 0	36	26	4	66
Fair bond 1	3	9	11	23
Poor bond 2	0	1	2	3
Total	39	36	17	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 22,16 with 4 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 22,16$) = 0,0002

P/O 2

Rows: Parent-child communication

Columns: Bond with custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
Good 1 & 2	34	3	0	37
Fair 2 & 3	11	2	0	13
Poor 4, 5, 6	21	18	3	42
Total	66	23	3	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 14,20 with 4 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 14,20$) = 0,0067

P/O 3

Rows: Age at divorce

Columns: Bond with custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
0 to 2-11	11	1	0	12
3-0 to 6-11	18	7	1	26
7-0 to 12-11	30	11	1	42
13 and above	7	4	1	12
Total	66	23	3	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,42 with 6 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,42$) = 0,9644

P/O 4

Rows: Age at divorce

Columns: Bond with non-custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
0 to 2-11	1	4	5	10
3-0 to 6-11	10	12	3	25
7-0 to 12-11	20	13	8	41
13 and above	4	5	3	12
Total	35	34	19	88

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 6,10 with 6 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 6,10$) = 0,4121

P/O 5

Rows: Child's divorce-related problems (now)
(lowest score = least problems)

Columns: Bond with custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
0	42	7	0	49
1	12	6	1	19
2, 3, 4	12	10	2	24
Total	66	23	3	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 7,95 with 4 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 7,95$) = 0,0935

P/O 6

Rows: Child's divorce-related problems (now)

Columns: Bond with non-custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
0	21	16	10	47
1	6	6	5	17
2, 3, 4	8	12	4	24
Total	35	34	19	88

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,26 with 4 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,26$) = 0,8675

P/O 7

Rows: Parent's perception of child's divorce-related
problems
(lowest scores = least problems)

Columns: Bond with custodial parent

	Warm Bond 0	Fair Bond 1	Poor Bond 2	Total
0	42	11	1	54
1	10	4	1	15
2, 3, 4	14	8	1	23
Total	66	23	3	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 1,31 with 4 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 1,31$) = 0,8591

APPENDIX 35

INDEXDETAILS OF COMPUTATION:PARENT-CHILD COMMUNICATION *IN RELATION TO SELECTED VARIABLES

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Print-Out (P/O) no.</u>	<u>Page no.</u>
Adjustment		
All	1	443
Boys	2	
Girls	3	
Age at divorce	4	444
Sex of custodial parent	5	
Sex of child	6	
Turbulence	7	
Communication (parent's perception) and communication (child's perception)	8	445

* Composite score

Rows: Parent-child communication

Columns: Adjustment

P/O 1 All children

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
Good 0 & 1	20	17	37
Fair 2 & 3	7	6	13
Poor 4, 5 & 6	22	20	41
Total	49	43	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 0,02$ with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,02$) = 0,9880

P/O 2 Boys

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
Good 0 & 1	8	5	13
Fair 2 & 3	3	4	7
Poor 4, 5 & 6	14	11	25
Total	25	20	45

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,11 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,11$) = 0,9458

P/O 3 Girls

	Good adj. 19 & less	Poor adj. Over 19	Total
Good 0 & 1	12	12	24
Fair 2 & 3	4	2	6
Poor 4, 5 & 6	8	9	17
Total	24	23	47

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,13 with 2 df

Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,13$) = 0,9349

P/O 4

Rows: Parent-child communication
Columns: Age at divorce

	0 to 2-11	3-0 to 6-11	7-0 to 12-11	Over 13	Total
Good 0 & 1	5	6	23	3	37
Fair 2 & 3	3	3	6	1	13
Poor 4, 5, 6	4	17	13	8	42
Total	12	26	42	12	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 8,54
with 6 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 8,54$) = 0,2010

P/O 5

Rows: Parent-child communication
Columns: Sex of custodial parent

	Father	Mother	Total
Good 0 & 1	11	26	37
Fair 2 & 3	3	10	13
Poor 4, 5, 6	27	15	42
Total	41	51	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 12,34$ with 2 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 12,34$) = 0,0021

P/O 6

Rows: Parent-child communication
Columns: Sex of child

	Boys	Girls	Total
Good 0 & 1	13	24	37
Fair 2 & 3	7	6	13
Poor 4, 5, 6	25	17	42
Total	45	47	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

$\chi^2 = 4,83$ with 2 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 4,83$) = 0,0894

P/O 7

Rows: Parent-child communication
Columns: Turbulence

	Low 0, 1, 2	High 3 & 4	Total
Good 0 & 1	20	12	32
Fair 2 & 3	8	4	12
Poor 4, 5, 6	22	16	38
Total	50	32	82

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 0,06
with 2 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 0,06$) = 0,9697

P/O 8

Rows: Communication, parent's perception

Columns: Communication, child's perception

(lowest scores = best communication)

	0	1	2	3	Total
0	28	7	2	1	38
1	2	4	3	5	14
2	0	3	13	7	23
3	0	0	2	15	17
Total	30	14	20	28	92

Bivariate statistics for counts:-

 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 74,37 with 9 df
 Prob. ($\chi^2 > 74,37$) = 0,0000

TAT CONFLICT SCORE
IN RELATION TO ADJUSTMENT

P/O 1

Rows: TAT Conflict score (lowest scores = least conflict)
Columns: Clinical assessment (lowest scores = best adjustment)

	1	2	3, 4, 5	Total
1	4	9	5	18
2	9	19	14	42
3, 4	1	3	27	31
Total	14	31	46	91

Bivariate statistics for counts:-
 χ^2 (with continuity correction) = 20,98 with 4 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 20,98$) = 0,0003

P/O 2

Rows: Adjustment
Columns: TAT Conflict score (lowest scores = least conflict)

	1	2	3, 4	Total
Good adj. 19 & less	14	24	10	48
Bad adj. Over 19	4	18	21	43
Total	18	42	31	91

Bivariate statistics for counts:-
 χ^2 = 10,07 with 2 df
Prob. ($\chi^2 > 10,07$) = 0,065

APPENDIX 37

INDEXISB PROTOCOLS

- Example 1 : Subject no. 24, 15 year old boy, mother custody, age 5 at divorce.
- Example 2 : Subject no. 65, 14 year old girl, father custody, age 5 at divorce.
- Example 3 : Subject no. 90, 18 year old girl, father custody, age 11 at divorce.
- Example 4 : Subject no. 69, 9 year old girl, father custody, age 5 at divorce.
- Example 5 : Subject no. 76, 24 year old male, father custody, age 14 at divorce.
- Examples
6 & 7 : Two members of pilot study, brothers of 12 and 10 years respectively, who at the time of the divorce 8 years earlier had been awarded conditionally to their mother's custody. Custody reverted to father shortly thereafter.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like the German army, firearms and weapons.
2. The happiest time was when I was over-
seas
3. I want to know if President Nixon was
not kicked out of office because he didn't like
Jews
4. I regret that I did not buy the Mauser
from Finn for R65.
5. Boys are good guys.
6. A mother _____
7. I feel that diamonds are not a good
investment because there are too many to be valuable
8. I can't get to like Africans.
9. I suffer when the Africans teach or
starts talking and I don't know what's going
on.
10. The future is that I want to work.
in Egypt
11. I need to
12. Marriage is out of the question since I think
it is better to be single.

13. Sometimes I Fell like getting in a boat
and leaving SA
14. I hate most Jews and Israel.
15. I am very Fond of guns and shooting
targets
16. The only trouble _____
17. I wish I were born in France and not
South Africa.
18. My father owned a delomotion Company.
19. My greatest worry is that I will Fail AFri
and the natives will attack before I'm gone
20. Most girls _____

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like playing tennis and going to parties and friends, and visiting my mother
2. The happiest time is away from home visiting ma. or friends
3. I want to know why exactly do you come to the home (our home) and why must girls stay
(with father)
4. I regret staying with a man because
you can't talk with him with what you
5. Boys My father doesn't allow us to go out with
(want to say to women)
boys until 16. I think it's stupid (causes deceiving)
6. A mother I don't really want another mother but someone to help in the house.
7. I feel he should be more soft on his punishment and not to tell us to do right
things which he does wrong
8. I can't bear when father punishes the boys when they did wrong and then the
9. I suffer from headaches (girls must also be and restless sleep. punished.)
10. The future holds nothing for me. at home.
(for him wrong)
11. I need someone to help around in the house-work, cooking & ironing.
12. Marriage is nothing to me. because how would I know if my stepmother would help us, be nice and not be a tattl tail to my father if do we do wrong and why she can't punish us in a decent way.

13. Sometimes I feel like running away from home
14. I hate it when my brothers & sister get hidings (really mean hidings)
15. I am very rushed in our house got know time to play.
16. The only trouble is that father is forcing us to do things we don't want to do.
17. I wish I was married and got a husband
18. My father allows no friends during week days & on week ends when working. I think it's unfair
19. My greatest worry is the future and when I start going out with boys ^{How my pg} _(will react)
20. Most girls go out with boys and have fair parents. example.

One day, Alex and David were mowing the front lawn. Me and Charmaine were inside. we can't hear ^{the} lawn mower as it is a push one. It was very hot day. So they went to a friend without us knowing so later on David came back to tell us Alex has got cut with a knife. Luckily the ~~fr~~ friends parents were at home. But when father comes home and wants to know why the boys went to the friend. He punished Charmaine and I as well. We are not allowed to go out to any friends for a year which I think is a very unfair he did not even ask why the boys went to ~~the friends~~ house.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like to be with re-born Christians, there com-
pany is tremendous
2. The happiest time of my times have been since
my conversion eg going to church, meeting etc
3. I want to know more about Jesus and His
Word
4. I regret not having thought about this before
now
5. Boys are very good company, most of my
friends are guys
6. A mother should be loving and not like my
one
7. I feel great, on top of the world since
I accept Christ into my life & changed person
8. I can't believe that people won't turn to
Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour
9. I suffer because of the barrier between
my mother and I
10. The future is not something to look forward
to if you are saved. To be with God for eternity
11. I need to learn to drive and do matric
so that I can do nursery school teaching
12. Marriage is a good thing to experience
God wants it and you should pray about
the person whom to marry, to see if it
is His will

13. Sometimes I get very downhearted with my parents and friends who will not believe in Jesus Christ that HE is Lord.
14. I hate ~~nothing~~ drugs, cigarettes, smokes, booze, sex before marriage. IN GENERAL ALL SIN !! and it is something to look forward to when our time is over.
15. I am very pleased that I'm saved and know what I have for the future.
16. The only trouble is that I wish everybody could be saved. What a beautiful world it would be!
17. I wish that Jewish peoples eyes and ears be opened to the Lord & all unsaved Christians etc.
18. My father needs someone of his own age to be with - a partner & Jesus Christ in his heart.
19. My greatest worry is that I won't meet my family in heaven.
20. Most girls are beautiful, force themselves onto boys or men, ask for trouble, then upset 'cos they get it.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like Ice-skating, and going to drive-ins in the night
2. The happiest time I had was when my father and Mother were together
3. I want to know Why my sister always fights with me, because we do not
4. I regret my family was together and could have a happy time. ^{mean it.}
5. Boys I have one boy friend. Wich I love and adore him.
6. A mother I am very glad to have a mother, and I appreciate the things she
7. I feel I need my father very much. ^{does for me}
8. I can't _____
9. I suffer _____
10. The future Went all quite well but I am still unhappy.
11. I need my father and mother, and I am glad I have them.
12. Marriage I will get married when I am big, but too a large gentleman like my father.

13. Sometimes I enjoy myself at good places.
14. I hate it when my sister fights with me.
15. I am very ~~desert~~ desirant and Do not go out with a boy by myself.
16. The only trouble is I am very scard when my mother gets cross.
17. I wish my mother and father would come together again.
18. My father is very handsome and very kind. I Love my father very much.
19. My greatest worry is about my father and mother.
20. Most girls that I know are very nice Friends.

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like SECURITY
2. The happiest time IS WHEN ONE REALIZES ONE'S ETERNITY.
3. I want to know HOW TO ENHANCE MYSELF IN EVERY WAY.
4. I regret ANY UNFULFILLED AMBITIONS
5. Boys WITH OTHER BOYS HAVE A BETTER TIME TOGETHER, THAN BY THEMSELVES
6. A mother SHOULD FEEL HER DUTY MORE.
7. I feel THAT ~~AM~~ I SHOULD NOT BE TOO DISCONTENT
8. I can't INVOLVE MYSELF TOO MUCH WITH EVERYBODY
9. I suffer WHEN I REALIZE OTHER PEOPLES MISFORTUNES WORSE THAN MY OWN.
10. The future CAN ONLY BE GOOD AS IT IS LIMITLESS
11. I need TO ~~MAKE~~ BE ABLE TO GET THE MOST OUT OF LIFE.
12. Marriage IS AN INSTITUTION THAT WILL EITHER ATTRACT OR REPEL ONE

13. Sometimes I GET VERY DEPRESSED
WITH EXTERNAL APPEARANCES
14. I hate OTHER PEOPLE INTERFERING
NEEDLESSLY
15. I am very INTROSPECTIVE, BUT TRY TO
MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE SOCIALABLE
16. The only trouble IS NOT HAVING ENOUGH
OF WHAT ONE WANTS
17. I wish THAT I WERE COMPLETELY
SPIRITUALLY AT EASE
18. My father IS A VERY GOOD CHRISTIAN
19. My greatest worry is LOSING CONTROL OF
MYSELF
20. Most girls SEEM TO HAVE VERY SHALLOW
PERSONALITIES, THOUGH THERE ARE
EXCEPTIONS

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.

Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like playing tennis and football because I think it's great fun.
2. The happiest time is going with my mum and
gran on a holiday or even spending weekend with them.
3. I want to know why I can't stay with my mother
in moment
4. At home in Roudhousch I feel very homesick.
5. I regret coming home from enjoyable weekends.
6. At bedtime I don't do much but go straight
to sleep.
7. Boys are good company when I'm worried
especially my friends.
8. The best _____
9. What annoys me most is when my step-mother
shouts at me for no reason.
10. People _____
11. A mother is good to person to discuss problems
with.
12. I feel lonely when my brother and sister
go to friends.

13. My greatest fear is being hit by my father.
14. In school _____
15. I can't express myself how much I would
like to stay with my mother.
16. Sports are good fun.
17. When I was younger I was much happier
because my folks weren't divorced.
18. My nerves _____
19. Other people are not always as they should
be, e.g. step-mother.
20. I suffer from homesickness
21. I failed my ~~line~~
22. Reading is boring.
23. My mind is very over worked.
24. The future remains to be seen
25. I need _____

26. Marriage Should be carefully thought over.
27. I am best when it comes to soccer
28. Sometimes it's a OK. with my step (very seldom)
29. What pains me is my mom arguing with me.
30. I hate going to Hebrew.
31. My life depends on the future
32. My parents shouldn't have got divorced
33. I am 'very unhappy.
34. The only trouble _____
35. I wish I could stay with my mom.
36. Secretly _____
37. I hate divorce.
38. Divorce is terrible.
39. My greatest worry is losing something of my dad's house.
40. Dancing is good fun when girls are present
41. Most girls are beautiful
42. My father is okay at him

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE BLANK

Complete these sentences to express your real feelings.
Try to do every one. Be sure to make a complete sentence.

1. I like doing sport
2. The happiest time in Dublin when we
were at the fairs
3. I want to know why I can't live with
my mother
4. At home It is - miserable
5. I regret my father shouting at us
when we tell him we want to live at my mother's
6. At bedtime I go straight to sleep
7. Boys are rough some are not
8. The best _____
9. What annoys me _____
10. People are normally full of
joy
11. A mother _____
12. I feel miserable in my step
mother's house

13. My greatest fear —
14. In school I have lots of friends
15. I can't —
16. Sports I like sport especially
athletics
17. When I was younger I lived with my
gran
18. My nerves —
19. Other people are normally
friendly people
20. I suffer —
21. I failed —
22. Reading I can read
23. My mind gets worried when
I have something
24. The future I hope it will be
happy
25. I need —

26. Marriage not yet
27. I am best when I am with my grand
parents or with my mom or step
28. Sometimes I am very naughty father
29. What pains me —
30. I hate living with my step
mother
31. My life —
32. My parents My mom is full
of jokes
33. I am very inquisitive what is
going on
34. The only trouble —
35. I wish I could live with my
mother
36. Secretly —
37. I —
38. Divorce I was two when
my mom and dad got divorced
39. My greatest worry is —
40. Dancing I can't
41. Most girls are childish
42. My father worries too much about
unnecessary things

APPENDIX 38

INDEXTAT PROTOCOLS

- Example 1 : Subject no. 90; 18 year old girl, father custody,
age 11 at divorce.
- Example 2 : Subject no. 76, 24 year old male, father custody,
age 14 at divorce.
- Example 3 : Subject no. 36, 19 year old female, mother
custody, age 10 at divorce.
- Example 4 : Subject no. 91, 15 year old boy, father custody,
age 9 at divorce.
- Example 5 : Subject no. 69, 9 year old girl, father custody,
age 5 at divorce.

TAT PROTOCOLS

(see Appendix 15 for TAT cards)

Subject no. 90

1. A little down-hearted boy; he hasn't learnt to play this instrument. He's staring, wishing he could play it. Looks very unhappy. If he has enough faith, he'll learn to play it; where there's a will, there's a way.
2. She's going to church. She and the other woman are just watching the labourer. They don't look down on the labourer. It's a feeling of unity. They're friends, not family. She's pregnant.
3. He's committed suicide. He shot himself and dropped the gun. He was very unhappy, resulting from divorce. Or - she's broken up with her husband, found life too much. She's probably Jewish, because Christians wouldn't commit suicide, it's a sin.
4. She's falling over this guy and he doesn't like her. She's just a little flirt. She's very concerned, but he couldn't care less.
6. Son and mother. They're both depressed, waiting for something, but don't know what it is. They have no aim in life. Because of that, they're not together, can't understand each other.
7. It reminds me of me and my mother. She's not listening to her, she's turning away. She's reading a book. The girl's not listening; she's in another world, thinking of something else.
8. This boy is thinking of this - it's war. There's a gun. About trying to heal a person.
10. Loving kindness. Husband and wife.

Subject no. 76

1. It takes me back to when I learnt the violin myself. He's looking at it. Will there be a future in it for him? He's looking at his future, as represented by the violin. Will he be good enough? He seems very doubtful. He doubts his ability to make a success of it.
2. Looks biblical. Woman on right is contemplating the bloke work. Content to let others work. The other woman is an academic type, disdainful of agricultural activity. She's getting down to studying, reading ... academic pursuit as opposed to harvesting. They are part of a family. They're only tied together by blood, but apart from that, have nothing in common.

3. Terribly worried about something. Grief. Suicidal. Contemplating. Given up all hope, slouched on floor, wants to curl up and die.
(E: "What happens in the end?") Does manage to rally - the situation is not quite that desperate.
(Note absence of sex)
4. The woman desires the man far more than vice versa. He's irresponsible, has fleeting involvements. She's seeking security, something more permanent. He's after fresh pastures. There's a wild look in his eyes. He's generally irresponsible.
6. Bereavement. A recently widowed lady; her son. They're poles apart. She's from a simple background. He's been to college and had a good education. He's come back to attend his father's funeral. There's a large gap between them - they can't communicate. They're both very perturbed about this, but can't do anything about it.
7. Mother or aunt is trying to read to child who's not interested. It seems a good home, reasonable amount of money - upper middle class. She's bored, wants to play with her doll. Mother - or aunt - is doing it out of duty; she'd be more interested in something else. They're both involved in duty - that's the only common denominator.
8. There's an operation going on. The patient and the boy are the same. A rifle - no real significance. It's involved in war. A surgeon's trying to save his life. The boy is watching it detached. They're definitely the same people (i.e. boy and patient.) He has a premonition.
(E: "In the end?") He definitely recovers, lives.
10. An elderly woman. Two people embracing on their diamond wedding anniversary. They have found fulfillment in each other and are very grateful for this. They've both given a great deal to each other.

Subject no. 36

1. A little boy in deep concentration, pensive mood. He's looking at the violin, studying the notes, trying to relate them to the instrument. He's quite intrigued - or, he is bored, being forced to play the violin against his will. I'll stick by the first answer.
2. A peasant scene. Out in the country. There's a man leading a horse. The young girl is a teacher. She has some connection with the man. It could be her lover. The woman on the right is gloating and looking at the man. There's animosity between the two women over the man.
3. An upsetting picture. A young girl in her late teens, lying over a couch, very depressed or very upset. The tone is of sadness.
(E: "What happens in the end?") She will emerge.

4. Old time film.
6. Son-in-law is asking his future mother if he can marry her daughter. He's feeling anxious. The mother is not quite sure.
7. A beautiful picture. Mother and daughter. Mother has a book in her hand - counselling her daughter. Girl has a baby in her arms. Mother is telling her the facts of life and she's not paying attention. A serene picture.
8. In his imagination. He probably wants to become a surgeon, it's his ambition.
10. Tender embrace between man and woman. A moving picture. A tender moving picture - beautiful ... husband and wife.

Subject no. 91

1. The boy's trying to figure out how to do a drawing. He's stuck with one part, doesn't know how to do it. He's trying to work out what to do.
2. (Laughs) Girl's just come from school. She stays on a farm. The father's busy ploughing fields. The mother just stands and watches.
3. Girl is crying, upset. Has had an argument.
4. The man's come home to his wife, drunk. The wife is trying to control him.
6. This man is upset. He's come to his mother to try and get help from her to see what he should do.
7. A young girl playing around with her doll, and her mother trying to get her to do her schoolwork. She listens to her mother.
8. Boy is thinking that he hopes someone gets killed. He's had an argument with someone and wants him to be killed. (E: "What happens in the end?") He is killed.
10. A woman crying on her husband's shoulder, because she's had an argument with someone and is really upset. She's with her mother-in-law. He comforts her.

Subject no. 69

1. The little boy is trying to learn how to play the violin. He looks blind. Yes, he learns in the end.
2. A girl is going to college. She's thinking about her future. She's very sad because her mother and father died, and she gets treated badly.

3. A little boy is sitting near his bed crying because he has no mother or father. He's an orphan. He's asking God to help him.
4. Lady and man; they're married. They're quarrelling in their house. The man wants to divorce her. She's asking him, please he mustn't - "I still want my family."
6. It's an old lady and her son. He came to visit her. She's looking very sad because her daughter died. The man wants to see who killed her.
7. The child's mother is about 20. She's just had a baby. The mother is reading to the girl; a bible story to teach her about the Lord.
8. This is terrible - two men kidnapped one man, and this is his son. They're going to kill him and his son is very sad because he has no mother, so he'll be an orphan.
10. This lady and man have just had a fight. The lady asked the man to forgive her, and stop the fight. The man forgave her and kissed her on her forehead. They never quarrelled again.

APPENDIX 39

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION
OF MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

Ratings on eight variables making up
adjustment score :

Agreement between Interview and ISB

Variable	p value
Family relationships	< 0,0001
Independence	< 0,0001
Social relationships	< 0,0001
Level of aspiration	< 0,0001
Self-concept	< 0,01
Optimism/pessimism	< 0,0001
Occupational adjustment	< 0,0001
Sex-role functioning	< 0,0001

Agreement between Interview and TAT

Variable	p value
Family relationships	< 0,0001
Independence	NS
Social relationships	0,1
Level of aspiration	0,1
Self concept	0,001
Optimism/pessimism	< 0,05
Occupational adjustment	0,01
Sex-role functioning	0,001

Agreement between ISB and TAT

Variable	p values
Family relationships	< 0,0001
Independence	< 0,01
Social relationships	0,1
Level of aspiration	< 0,005
Self-concept	NS
Optimism/pessimism	< 0,05
Occupational adjustment	0,005
Sex-role functioning	< 0,01

(See Appendix 25 for raw scores)